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THE CASTILIAN.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "GOMEZ ARIAS."

Let 'em call it mischief:
When it is past and prosper'd, 'twill be virtue.

BEN JONSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE CASTILIAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESTORATION.

La fortune agissant ses inconstantes ailes
Plane d'un vol bruyant sur la tête des rois.
Aux destins des états son caprice préside,
Elle seule dispense ou la gloire ou l'affront,
Enleve un diadème, et, d'un essor rapide,
Le porte sur un autre front.

Hor. Trad. Laharpe.

Don Pedro being restored to the throne of Castile, now advanced towards Seville, whilst his rival, Trastamara, sought refuge in France. The country submitted peaceably to the autho-

rity of Don Pedro, and every grandee and dignitary in the realm appeared delighted with the restoration of their lawful king. The royal entry into Seville was graced with a repetition of the same scenes which had previously marked the entrance of Trastamara; the same concourse thronged around the cavalcade, to behold the man they had formerly so reviled; the same activity prevailed amongst the civil authorities in testifying every mark of respect; and the same mouths again vociferated the *vivas* with which they formerly welcomed Don Enrique.

If the entrance of the usurper had been honoured by the presence of Sir Bertrand Duguesclin and his friends, the entry of Don Pedro was still more brilliant, by the attendance of the Black Prince and his knights. The illustrious strangers were regarded with sentiments of admiration and respect, and were every where received with unqualified demonstrations of joy. Indeed, not only Don Pedro, but all conspicuous persons in his retinue were hailed with

acclamations, and the clergy and wealthy men were particularly eager in the proffer of their services. How far sincerity was blended with such professions, it is not our province to determine. Don Pedro received these effusions of loyalty with a stern and haughty look; whilst the sardonic smile, which occasionally played upon his features, indicated the value he placed upon such equivocal testimonies of regard. It was difficult to conceal from his penetrating eye, the artful workings of dissimulation: and he clearly perceived that compulsion, more than spontaneous feeling, dictated the apparent cordiality of the clergy and nobility. The shouts of the rabble he despised, for he knew they had graced the triumph of his rebel brother, and would grace in rotation that of any other successful traitor.

Far different thoughts than those of victory and concord occupied the mind of the king, as he revisited the scene of his ancient power, and more recent conflict. He considered the *vivas*

that encumbered the air, not as a testimony of rejoicing, but as a solemn mockery, meant to impose upon his judgment, and divert the effects of his just indignation. Thus his temper was doubly soured, and he pondered within his mind, upon the most plausible way of dealing out his vengeance without giving umbrage to the illustrious ally who was seated by his side, and seemed providentially placed there as a salutary check on his vindictive feelings.

On the day following the arrival of the king at Seville, a grand *besamanos*, or state audience, was held at the Alcazar. Thither all the most powerful and wealthy crowded in a promiscuous throng. Not only the friends of Don Pedro, or those who had observed a perfect neutrality in the previous contest, but, in virtue of the amnesty, even the most strenuous supporters of Don Enrique hastened to pay their homage to the king. What different sentiments, what opposite feelings, actuated the conduct of the host of courtiers who were now urging their

career towards the same goal, apparently impelled by one general motive! An universal expression of content and satisfaction pervaded the features of all; and yet there were few that reflected faithfully the sentiments by which the individual was animated.

The grand hall of audience was thronged almost to suffocation, affording at once a magnificent and striking spectacle. Don Pedro occupied his throne, and on his right hand, in a chair of state, sat the noble Edward; Sir John Chandos, Ferran de Castro, and a few others of his most faithful adherents and allies immediately beside them. To enhance the grandeur of the ceremony, a chosen guard of honour, composed of veteran warriors and mail-clad knights, were ranged on either side of the throne; and the large banners of Castile and Guienne united above, in token of amity and alliance. The middle of the hall was occupied by the visitors, who poured in without inter-

mission. Every face was decked in smiles, and all eyes were strained to catch a glimpse of the sovereign so lately the object of their abhorrence, but now, by a miraculous transition, the object of universal regard and veneration. The high dignitary of the church, the proud grandee, and the wealthy *rico-home* came in succession, and kneeling before the throne, fervently kissed the hand of the king.

As the ceremony proceeded, Don Pedro felt at intervals great difficulty in restraining the ebullition of his real feelings; for he often perceived his most avowed and implacable enemies advancing with an assumption of cordiality and humility which he knew was foreign to their nature, striving to shew a respect they could not feel. Indeed, it required all the self-possession of Don Pedro to refrain from an explosion of indignation, as the courtiers tendered their honied words of congratulation. Ah, could Don Pedro have blasted with a glance each sycophant in the mock dis-

play, that imposing scene of grandeur and apparent unanimity, would soon have been converted into one of ruin and desolation.

The Black Prince beheld the strange scene with visible satisfaction. He was struck with the general manifestation of adherence to the king; and imagined that the turbulent and factious, when they saw their expectations crushed, and every probability of seconding Trastamara lost, would abandon their projects and return to their duty. Alas! Edward weighed them in the scales of his own generous disposition. His life had been chiefly spent in the toils of the camp, or in the society of gallant knights and frank warriors; he was therefore but little acquainted with the arts of courtiers, or the varied and delusive colours of hypocrisy. He beheld all the visitors exhibiting the most unequivocal proof of satisfaction, and Don Pedro returning their manifestations with a suitable cordiality, and he therefore concluded that long days of tranquillity and happiness were in store for

Castile. He turned towards the king, and smiling, ventured again to offer his congratulations.

"Sir King," he said, "it pleases me well to be a witness of this scene. Your subjects appear animated by one single opinion; and the clergy, nobility, and *ricos-homes* are, I see, perfectly rejoiced at your restoration."

"Ay, my prince!" sardonically replied Don Pedro, "great changes generally produce these effects; and it is a matter of surprise how a tyrant in misfortune suddenly becomes invested with the noblest attributes of man, when fortune and victory again smile upon his banners."

"But yet these professions bear the stamp of sincerity."

"Oh! no doubt they are sincere," rejoined Don Pedro; "as sincere as fear and self-interest can make them. See, dear cousin, the herd of smooth, designing knaves, with their placid smiles and benignant looks—a plague on the accursed impostors—not one of them but would

willingly plunge a dagger into my heart, had he the courage to perpetrate the deed. Look at yonder *magnifico*, Señor; it is the archbishop of this city—perhaps Don Pedro has no bitterer enemy than he, yet he comes with suavity of look and edifying mildness of manner to honour his king, while his head I trow is running on plots and conspiracies against him."

The personage thus alluded to now advanced towards the throne; he was a man of imposing appearance, his hair was silvered with the frost of age, and his whole bearing betokened the high churchman, blended with the worldly grandee. He approached the king with an humble yet dignified composure, and assuming a placid smile, he kissed the royal hand.

"Señor," he said, "permit an unworthy minister of the Almighty to offer the congratulations of the clergy of Seville upon the glorious restoration of your highness to the throne of your ancestors. The Chapter of Seville are

most happy at this unexpected and fortunate change, which Divine Providence hath in its wisdom and goodness brought about."

"*Ilustrisimo*," answered Don Pedro, with an equal degree of courtesy, "I am intimately aware of the good sentiments of the holy body you represent, and I am as grateful as it behoveth me: moreover, I shall never lose sight of their good intentions towards me."

The archbishop passed on, and Prince Edward could not conceal a movement of surprise at the cordial character of a scene which had been preceded by so unpromising a prologue.

"You seem amazed, sweet cousin!" said Don Pedro, smiling.

"In troth," replied the prince, "what has just passed has somewhat astounded my comprehension, I confess."

"Why," returned the king, "it may indeed appear strange, and yet it is a line of conduct I

am compelled to adopt. I am surrounded by enemies, and it is necessary to meet them with their own weapons; with smiles and fair words they mean to deceive me—with smiles and fair words I shall mar their secret plots."

"Nay, Sir, mayhap you judge them too severely."

"Heaven save the mark! not I. These wretches have already forfeited their lives; at your intercession they are spared; but mayhap they may again give me an opportunity, and then," he added, in gloomy joy, "my patience will be exhausted, and justice will claim its due. Yes! by all the saints, on the first transgression they die!"

"God forefend!" exclaimed the prince, who now with sorrow perceived Don Pedro relapsing into that stern and sombre mood, which the idea of wrongs unavenged always awakened in his mind.

The king, however, soon recovered his composure, as he felt loth to impress his illustrious

ally with unfavourable ideas of his disposition. The approach, however, of Don Martin Yañez, to whose negligence, or rather treachery, he owed the loss of his treasure, somewhat ruffled his equanimity, and nearly overset his resolves to demean himself with at least apparent kindness; indeed, he pressed his lips, and involuntarily uttered a curse at the sight of the false treasurer.

"Now, now," he bitterly said, addressing Prince Edward, "see that traitor, smirking and simpering, as he endeavours to make his way towards the throne—a curse on the vile hypocrite and his mock humility!"

Don Martin at length arrived, and humbly prostrating himself before the king,

"Ah! Señor," he cried, in an abject tone, "what enthusiasm a good subject like me must feel at the sight of your august person, seated again on the throne of Castile!"

"*Guardeos Dios Don Martin.* Heaven preserve thy precious life," answered Don Pedro,

with visible exertion to smother his rising choler. "I am much pleased to find you here—exceedingly pleased, as I shall shortly take occasion to show you."

"Your gracious majesty overpowers me," rejoined the treasurer, "with undeserved favour. Ah! Señor, the loss of the treasure was not my—"

"Was not thy loss, in sooth," interrupted Don Pedro, smiling, "or thou hadst not survived it. But mention it not, good Don Martin; I shall take great care to obtain compensation in due time."

"In which command my services, my gracious liege, though it be idle in me to offer them; however, my life shall be devoted to your pleasure."

"In good faith, I accept your tender," replied Don Pedro; then, in an under tone, he added, "for he, at least, shall die."

Don Martin Yañez retired to make way for

a succeeding courtier. As he turned, Don Pedro could not restrain his angry feelings—"There goes a smooth traitor," he said, "and as expert a thief withal as my kingdom contains, notwithstanding the astonishing abilities some of my good subjects have evinced for the calling."

"And who is that tall personage?" inquired Edward, observing an elderly military-looking man, of commanding aspect.

"*Dios le bendiga!*"* replied the king, sarcastically, "that is Don Micer Gil de Bocanegra, grand admiral of Castile; he, too, is in my black lists."

"Your majesty ought to remember," returned Edward, "that those black lists were torn at my desire."

"Yes, but the names are still written in my memory, which, to my misery, is exceedingly tenacious on this point."

* God bless him.

" Sir King," resumed the prince, with severity, " forget not your promise; it becomes a king only to forget injuries."

" I never forget my promise," returned the king, abruptly; " nor," he added, in an under tone, " my injuries either."

Don Pedro felt this irksome restraint upon his inclinations, and could with difficulty support it. Gratitude and justice compelled him to acquiesce in the wishes of a prince to whom he owed his crown; but he could hardly restrain his indignation when he beheld rebels and traitors approaching his presence with impunity, relying upon the protection of a magnanimous knight, who was incapable of analyzing their profound duplicity and sinister designs. To remove these unpleasant thoughts, Don Pedro now turned to Ferran de Castro, who stood at a short distance, and commanded him to approach.

The Castilian obeyed, and the king, in a pro-

voking tone of feigned surprise and vexation began :—

" Don Ferran, why is the noble Don Egas absent from our court on so solemn an occasion? Certainly the cavalier for whom you were willing to pledge your life, affords us but indifferent proofs of his attachment and respect."

The Castilian was unable for some time to frame any plausible excuse.

" By Santiago!" continued the king, " it is most strange to find my *friends* absent when my rankest enemies are so forward in paying their homage."

" Señor," replied De Castro, " you arrived but yesterday, and Don Egas is old, and may be detained in his castle by indisposition."

" I should exceedingly grieve," proceeded the king, in a bantering tone, " that so loyal a cavalier should suffer at a time when he might come and claim the reward of his fidelity; however, I must not forget his beautiful daughter:

I wish particularly to be acquainted with the adored lady of the best Castilian knight; you must visit them immediately, and invite them to our court."

" Senor," said Ferran, " your order shall be obeyed."

Shortly after the king withdrew, and the assemblage broke up. Every one retired to speculate upon the past scene, and to augur regarding the future from the present conduct of the king. But, with all this seeming conciliatory spirit, there was perhaps not one whose former prejudices had been removed by the present interview—not one whose turbulent spirit was softened by the apparent improvement in the disposition of Don Pedro, or who totally abandoned every hope of stirring up rebellion afresh, although its hopes now seemed so thoroughly extinguished.

Unexpected events change and revolve the affairs of mankind, but nothing can ever divert the mind from dwelling with delight upon the

one sole and fixed principle of man's existence—self-interest, and plotting how it can best be attained at the expence of others.

Don Ferran de Castro felt assured that the king entertained no resentment against Don Egas; and the cordial way in which he desired the old cavalier to be invited to court, banished every apprehension he had entertained. Yet the noble Castilian was mortified at the negligent conduct of his old friend: it was therefore with a complication of feelings that he set out to fulfil his commission.

He was accompanied by Sir John Chandos, for a close friendship had already commenced between the two cavaliers, owing to that generosity of character, and noble nature, so congenial to both. Meantime, Don Egas de Vargas, far from suspecting what was to come, had passed every moment since the triumph of Don Pedro in continual uneasiness and suspense. He dreaded to appear before the king, whom he had forsaken, and who he considered was justly

offended at his untoward dereliction of duty. Indeed he was unable to determine what line of conduct to pursue; for, owing to that wavering disposition and over-nice precaution which had generally led him astray, he was now more perplexed than ever. Other courtiers and grandees, far more implicated than himself in the late proceeding; nay, some open and avowed enemies of Don Pedro, had made bold to present themselves at court, without either shame or alarm; but Don Egas had yet to acquire that consummate assurance, which great plotters and sycophants possess, and to learn how to banish all delicacy which might stand in the way of his advancement.

Confused, alarmed, perplexed, Don Egas sat venting a thousand curses upon the authors of his present embarrassment. He considered it most provoking that there should be so little consistency in political changes, that even the most prudent and wary person will be almost sure to find himself on the wrong side.

"What is to be done?" would Don Egas exclaim, addressing Costanza, who was now his constant companion: "a fine dilemma we are in. Who could have supposed that a fugitive king, abhorred, detested by his subjects, should now return victorious, to be praised and courted by those same men who would, but a short time since, have dispatched him unceremoniously enough to the other world? Oh! this mutability of all worldly speculations defies the utmost prudence, and makes the wisest man look like a fool. How, in the name of Satan, could any rational being have imagined that affairs should have taken this turn?"

Costanza, moved at the anxiety of her parent, invariably strove to administer every consolation in her power, by raising his hopes and trying to dispel his fears.

"Do not distress yourself," she said: "consider, Sir, you have taken no active part in the foregoing commotions."

"Oh! certainly not," replied Don Egas

eagerly seizing at the consolatory hint. "I may safely say I have taken no part at all: I have done nothing but pay my respects to a constituted king; and we are bound, even by holy writ, to honour the powers that be. His right to the crown, it was not my business to inquire into; whether justly or unjustly, he was *de facto* a king. I did not contribute to place him on the throne: I found him there; and accordingly, as in duty bound, I did homage, not to the person, but to the dignity!—Yes, certainly, the dignity; nothing more. Yet, I am rather apprehensive that Don Pedro is not the man to reason and allow the force of these nicer distinctions—his logic is of another kind."

"Perhaps you judge the king severely," observed Costanza, concealing a smile at the fancied dilemma in which the old cavalier was placed.

"Perhaps I may: though some call him *el*

justiciero;* and if he really be the strict friend of justice that he *pretends*, he must surely make some allowance for the situation in which I was placed. But do you know, child, there is another reason for my anxiety? that fool, that old dotard Pimiento! who knows the mischief he may have done by an indiscreet recital of what happened at Seville? He has no more prudence than a child—no, not so much."

"Nay, Sir, you must not impeach the integrity of the honest squire. No: he is incapable of any misrepresentation."

"Heaven forbid I should wantonly criminate him; but consider his mad vagaries, enough to set a whole nation at loggerheads. In his misguided zeal he may have made disclosures detrimental to my character."

"Sir, what have you to fear? you have been guilty of no crime."

"Oh! assuredly not; but Pimiento might

* Justice-doer.—Justicier.

indiscreetly ascribe to officious friendship for Trastamara, what, in reality, was solely conventional, or rather, convenient policy : and lay to the score of genuine attachment the mere dictates of necessity. And worse than all, I fear we are forsaken by our friends. If all had been well, Ferran de Castro would have been here since his return."

" Ah ! Sir, him at least we must not injure with unjust surmises," replied Costanza. " His duty, no doubt, detains him near his royal master, and has till now prevented his appearing at this castle."

" He is a most deserving young knight," observed Don Egas.

Costanza made no answer to this remark. A painful recollection crossed her mind. It was not long since her father would have persuaded her utterly to discard from her heart the man who now elicited that favourable exclamation. This inconsistency could not but prove extremely

mortifying to the lofty sentiments of Costanza. Her father observing her silence, proceeded.

" But you appear thoughtful, my dear child, when methinks you ought to be in high spirits, considering that Don Ferran returns victorious, and will, no doubt, reclaim his pledge: he cannot have forgotten his engagement to us. It is true, I compelled you to listen to Don Alvar, when I considered that all hope for the royal party was lost, but Heaven knows it was solely for your benefit. I was certainly led into error, but you are sensible, Costanza, it is the miserable attribute of man to err."

Unfortunately Don Egas possessed this attribute in an uncommon degree. His daughter had been alternately advised to embrace the proposals of her two lovers; but nature had kindly bestowed on Costanza an unusual share of firmness and integrity, as a counterpoise to her father's wavering disposition. Don Egas now perceived the policy of cultivating the friendship

of De Castro, who, from his fidelity and suffering in the cause of Don Pedro, was naturally esteemed to be the most influential man at court: the only Castilian, indeed, who seemed to be honoured with the affection and unlimited confidence of his sovereign.

Besides, Don Egas had always been inclined to favour the cause of Don Pedro, and was really a great admirer of Ferran, whom he would gladly have chosen for the husband of his child. Indeed he had only considered Don Alvar in the light of an honourable substitute, when the hope of the principal was lost. Thus, despite of his doubts, the old cavalier generally concluded his reflections and conversation by the most flattering hopes, that his unlucky political backsliding would be eventually overlooked. Still the idea of Pimiento perplexed him exceedingly; for he suspected, and not without foundation, that the old *escudero* had given to Ferran a circumstantial account of his proceedings.

Thus Don Egas passed his time, hoping and doubting—at one moment resolving to approach the king, at another thinking it would be more prudent and decent to keep within the castle until De Castro should make his appearance. But as this was delayed, notwithstanding his propinquity to the city of Seville, Don Egas grew more uneasy; for he very rationally argued, that the first object of a triumphant lover should be to hasten and throw his laurels at the feet of his mistress. Costanza, on the contrary, never lent herself to the suggestions of doubt. She felt convinced of the truth and constancy of Don Ferran, and she indignantly repulsed every idea which might tend to present him in colours less brilliant than those in which he had always appeared to her. She felt as confident of his faith as of her own; nor could she for a moment question the generosity of his disposition, in overlooking those inconsistencies by which her over-anxious parent had been tempted to commit himself. In this state of

things the old cavalier and his daughter were alarmed by the abrupt entrance of Pardillo, who had succeeded Pimiento in office, and whose duty it was to announce the arrival of visitors to the castle.

"Oh! Señor Don Egas!" exclaimed the warder; "I can scarcely credit my own eyes—I have seen—"

"What! whom?" eagerly inquired his master.

"Why *dios nos bendiga*, even Pimiento. I wonder what the old man wants here!"

"Well—does he come alone?" inquired Don Egas.

"Oh, no—he comes in the company of two gallant knights and a whole train of attendants. What *can* possibly bring Pimiento to the castle?"

"Most egregious fool!" cried his master, vexed; "how dare you think of Pimiento when more important persons claim our attention? Go—shew the strangers in."

Pardillo retired, not over satisfied with his mission. To him, indeed, Pimiento was the most important person of the party; for the old *escudero* might claim his former station in the castle, a boon which, if asked, would not be denied him, considering his services, and the circumstance of his being attached to the victorious party, which would doubtless have great weight with Don Egas, whose respect and predilection for supreme power knew no bounds.

Don Egas was now in a flutter of expectation, and Costanza also lost her usual composure in the tender anticipations of an attached woman. They were soon released from this suspense: in a moment Costanza was locked in the embrace of her lover, and Don Egas busily engaged in paying every attention to the companion of De Castro. The first salutation over, the old cavalier boldly addressed Don Ferran, to remove at once the unpleasantness of their relative situation. In this instance Don Egas prudently followed the example of the poor patient, who,

having a bitter potion to take, prefers to swallow it by one bold effort, rather than by delaying the evil to prolong the disagreeable operation.

"Don Ferran, my dear friend," he cried, with as much cordiality as he could assume; "we were almost fearful that you had forgotten us. Indeed your constant attendance on the king can only hold you excused for this neglect of your best friends, who, you may be assured, heartily welcome you to this castle, with your gallant friend."

"You are right, Señor," replied the cavalier; "it was only my duty to the king which could prevent my repairing hither on the moment of my arrival; and now let me introduce to you my companion and very good friend, for it is an honour to call Sir John Chandos by that title."

Don Egas started at a name which recalled such brilliant associations of glory and renown. He gazed on the warrior for some time in silence,

but he soon regained his composure in the vanity of having so illustrious a guest. He was profuse in his courtly demonstrations towards the English knight, who, however, felt rather annoyed at the teazing obsequiousness of Don Egas, as he would gladly have directed his attention towards Costanza, with whose imposing beauty he had been powerfully struck.

"Don Egas de Vargas," said the Castilian, "this visit you must not consider solely as one of pleasure; we come commissioned by the king—"

At this word, the visage of Don Egas lengthened, as if anticipating some unpleasant disclosure.

"To invite you and Costanza to court," continued Ferran; "indeed his majesty has been rather surprised at your absence from the state-audience on occasion of kissing hands."

"The king is, in sooth, very kind," replied Don Egas, in confusion, "very kind; but there are circumstances—"

"Nay, Señor," interrupted Sir John Chandos, good humouredly, "those circumstances are gone by."

"Surely, Sir," said De Castro, "you cannot doubt the intentions of the king; for I should be the last person instructed with an ungracious commission."

"To be explicit, Señores," replied Don Egas, "notwithstanding my well-known love for Don Pedro, and the heart-felt joy I experience at his happy restoration, perhaps some wrong statements may have injured me in the king's good opinion; for," he proceeded, with some confusion, "there are unexpected events in life which, even against our inclinations, imperceptibly involve an honest man in certain difficulties, which, though not criminal, may nevertheless be termed objectionable."

"Certainly," replied Sir John; "and Don Pedro, whom no one can accuse of deficiency in intellect, will, without doubt, make every allowance for your trying situation."

After a short conversation, the disagreeable subject was dismissed; and the mind of Don Egas acquired fresh confidence, overjoyed at the fortunate result of this explanation. The convivial board was soon plentifully laden in honour of the illustrious guests, and the day was spent in unalloyed contentment. The happiness of Ferran and Costanza was of that kind which can be felt, but not described. Don Egas grew noisy in his revelry; the exhilaration of his spirits was unbounded: he sent for his old friend Pimiento, whom he shook heartily by the hand, and congratulated him on his honourable office. Pardillo, in the mean time, having been assured by the squire, that he never again intended to resume the duties of warder, was no longer considered by that dignitary as a rival in the honours of his new office, with the rest of the household; he listened therefore with wonder and delight to Pimiento's recital of the deeds of Don Ferran, his master, at the battle of Najara.

Time wore away, and every one retired to repose, in anxious expectation of the morning; when, at an early hour, it was resolved that they should depart for Seville.

CHAPTER II.

COSTANZA AT COURT.

Mucho des lumbras corona
Mucho persuadiendo estas,
Mucho es tu poder y encanto
Pero, no blasones tanto
Que hay quien pueda mucho mas.

LOPE DE VEGA.

On the arrival of Don Egas and his daughter at Seville, Costanza was presented to the king, and the anxious fears of her father, for his own sake, had now vanished. For a few days, indeed, the old cavalier lived in continual agitation. Don Pedro had been so marked in his professions of regard to him—nay, there was so

unaccountable a degree of warmth and kindness in his behaviour towards the old nobleman—that Don Egas, with the feelings of one who was no stranger to courts, trembled lest the king might meditate some dreadful vengeance. His suspicions, however, gradually wore away, and he became not only tranquil, but happy, in the supposition that Don Pedro, from mere whim, or other motive, had taken a strong fancy to him, and that a short time would present him in the light of a favourite.

No man of any experience and shrewdness can accuse Don Egas of folly in entertaining these sentiments, for the old cavalier very rationally speculated not so much upon his own services or merit, as on the sovereign's caprice, which will generally predominate in the bestowal of royal favours. His judgment, however, this time deceived him; for the marked attentions which he received were but the natural consequences of the admiration excited by his daughter. Costanza had, indeed, from the first

moment made a strong impression on the mind of Don Pedro: her beauty had fired his ardent spirit, and as he became more acquainted with her and her many attractions, the king's admiration quickly ripened into a passion the more to be apprehended in a man of such arbitrary and violent temperament. Don Egas certainly beheld the assiduous attentions paid to his daughter by her sovereign; but he attributed them to that courtly gallantry for which Don Pedro had been generally distinguished. But if any thing indicated to the mind of the old cavalier, that the attention of the king was more particular than mere politeness dictated, he rather rejoiced at the event than felt any alarm at the probable results.

The Castilian, on the other hand, took a more particular view of the affair. To a lover, the admiration of another directed to a dear object can never be concealed, even when disguised under the semblance of esteem and friendship. How, then, could he be blind to the advances

of an admirer, who, armed with power like Don Pedro, did little to conceal his inclination? Don Ferran had no doubt of the sentiments of his sovereign, but he felt no pangs of restless jealousy; for his lofty mind indignantly repulsed every unworthy idea derogatory to Don Pedro, or to his own frank, unsuspicious character. He could only resent the conduct of the king, when he might find that the feelings of a high mind were not sufficient to preserve him in the path of rectitude and integrity. This moment had not yet come, and Ferran flattered himself that it never would. He felt persuaded of the generous disposition of the king, and was confident in his honour; for he never supposed that his friend and master would repay with such black ingratitude the man who had clung faithfully to his fortunes in the most trying moments of peril. He hastened therefore to remove every uneasy impression, by requesting the king's sanction to his marriage with Costanza.

Having free access at all times, he found no

difficulty in obtaining an interview. Don Pedro was sitting in his private apartment, and his thoughts appeared to be deeply immersed in some important speculation. As soon, however, as De Castro was announced, he rose, and with more than usual cordiality, advanced a few steps to receive the favoured cavalier.

"Good morning, my friend," he said; "you were precisely the person I wished to see and consult."

"I am happy then in having so fortunately chosen my time," replied Ferran; "for I came to trouble your highness."

"In what manner?" inquired the king.

"I have a boon to request."

"A boon! By Santiago, that indeed is something novel in the character of Don Ferran de Castro, who, spite of his many and important services to our person, never till now I believe was frank enough to ask what is surely his due. We are highly indebted to you; and, indeed, your having introduced so bright an ornament

to our court as Costanza de Vargas, is perhaps not the least title to our acknowledgments."

"Señor," replied the cavalier, respectfully, "I heartily congratulate myself, that Costanza de Vargas should have deserved your royal approbation."

"She is a perfect angel," answered the king, with warmth. "She recals vividly to my mind the lovely, the never to be forgotten Doña Maria: the same imposing beauty; the same mental endowments; the same goodness of temper; the same brilliant qualities and virtues. But I must not forget the claims of her knight," he added, smiling, "in the admiration of the lady. Now, Ferran, I was seriously thinking how to recompense your services. You wish to ask a favour; let me first make you an offer, otherwise I may be judged backward in doing justice to my friends. Look, Don Ferran;"—he then continued, pointing to a long scroll, "this is a list of the rich domains and property of the

rebel noblemen, the confiscation of which I have considered an act of justice. Read the document, and choose from it what may best accord with your inclination."

The Castilian looked stedfastly on the king, while a sensation of mixed respect for the person, but indignation at the proposal, swelled within his bosom. After a short pause,

"Señor," he said, proudly, "with all gratitude for your kind intentions, I humbly crave to decline such an offer."

"May I know your reasons, fair Sir?" inquired the king, evidently piqued.

"Sir," nobly returned the cavalier, "my adherence to your royal person sprung from a sense of duty, and my services are not to be repaid by wealth. Ferran de Castro never expected to be rewarded with the wages held out to the adherents of treason and conspiracy!"

"Here is chivalry by the rood!" cried Don Pedro, sarcastically. "Well, I humbly crave

your pardon, Sir Ferran—though, let me tell you, *puntilioso caballero*,* that the most gallant knights scrupled not to appropriate to their use what they have obtained by their prowess and right of conquest."

"But not of confiscation," returned the Castilian. "No, by my honour," he added, with fervent emotion, "it shall never be suspected that the hope of a reward actuated Ferran de Castro in adopting a course which originated in other sentiments!"

"Good heart!" returned the king, "I admire your pride; but I have much reason to complain of my own lot. Never was sovereign so unfortunately situated; what with friends who are blessed with a superabundance of delicacy and honour, and enemies who possess not a particle of either, I am really at a loss how to proceed: whatever I do meets with a wrong interpretation. My justice will be accounted cruelty, and my gratitude bribery. Well, Sir,"

* Punctilious knight.

he then added, in a sterner tone, "may I learn the nature of your request?"

"My honoured liege," cried De Castro, with emotion, "pardon me, if in declining your bounty I have said aught to offend. I am not so proud as to suppose you cannot recompense my humble services; nor do I arrogantly pretend to be above receiving a favour from my king, since the boon I have to ask is of a far more inestimable kind, than even the brilliant offers you have been pleased to make."

"Well," returned the king, appeased by the conciliatory tone in which this was spoken, "it rejoices me that I have the means of repaying my faithful friends, even according to their own fashion. Unfold your wishes—they are granted."

"Señor," resumed Ferran, in a firm tone, "you have been pleased to signify your admiration of the endowments and virtues of Doña Costanza de Vargas. You know that I am under engagements with this lady; nothing

more, then, now remains for the fulfilment of my happiness than your approval and consent. This is the boon Ferran de Castro has to request from the generosity of Don Pedro !"

The king, despite of his dissimulation, was not able to disguise an uneasy sensation at the just request of his favourite. He smiled, but no genuine feeling was there displayed, and his friendly demeanour could not conceal the visible restraint under which he laboured. For some time he forbore speaking, in the expectation that some further remark from Ferran would release him from his evident embarrassment; as, however, the young cavalier continued silent, Don Pedro was at length compelled to reply :—

" Why, my dear Ferran," he said, with affected good humour, " your demand has nothing in it contrary to justice and propriety, and certainly I can no wise object to it. Yet I must confess it is rather unexpected."

" Indeed, Señor !" quoth the knight, in surprise; " our marriage had been long settled,

and its completion was only prevented on account of the duty which obliged me rather to consult your service, than follow my own inclinations. If I mistake not, I had more than once the honour of acquainting your majesty with—"

"You need not repeat it," impatiently interrupted the king.

"At this happy time of your restoration," proceeded Don Ferran, "I thought myself justified in partaking of the general joy. There was never so favourable an opportunity for the celebration of the marriage—"

The king was again silent, yet his features exhibited the expression of a man occupied in perplexing thoughts. The Castilian, with the same confidence, proceeded—

"Therefore, Señor, I will joyfully avail myself of your majesty's good disposition towards me in preferring this request, to which I do not apprehend there can be any objection."

"Don Ferran," replied the king, gravely,

"you must not draw such hasty conclusions—there certainly is no apparent obstacle, but there are some good reasons which induce us to withhold our consent in the present instance."

"Heavens!" cried the cavalier, with emotion; "what am I to understand?"

"Do not alarm yourself, Ferran," said the king, in a friendly tone; "I do not mean to withhold my permission; I merely wish that the ceremony should be for a short time delayed."

"Señor," said the cavalier, with redoubled agitation, "may I be favoured with the cause that induces your majesty to procrastinate the happiness of one of your most faithful subjects."

"Certainly," replied Don Pedro; "you are aware, Don Ferran, of the intended union of the princess our eldest daughter with the gallant Duke of Lancaster? Soon as the necessary arrangements are made the ceremony will take place, and scarcely two months will elapse before the festivities on so joyful an occasion will glad-

den our realms. It is my pleasure, therefore, that your marriage should likewise be postponed until that period—the princess has taken a particular fancy to Costanza, and would feel particularly gratified at this arrangement. Now, I doubt not, that Ferran de Castro will evince no reluctance at a delay of two months, when the sacrifice is so earnestly desired by Doña Beatrice and by myself."

"Señor," gravely replied Don Ferran, "it is my duty to be satisfied with your arrangement; but I will not pretend to disguise my real sentiments:—fully sensible of the honour Costanza receives from the esteem of your noble daughter, and grateful for such marks of distinction, I yet must declare I was not prepared to meet with a refusal, however kindly meant."

"Refusal!" cried Don Pedro, nettled; "methinks you might have chosen a more discreet term when speaking of our wishes. No, Señor, you must not so unjustly interpret our actions.

Certainly, from Don Ferran de Castro this evident dissatisfaction comes with an ill grace, after all his zeal in our service."

"Señor," nobly returned the cavalier, "the zeal which I have shewn in the service of your majesty will remain for ever the same, and I trust that a word spoken under the influence of disappointed feelings may be excused. I will now beg leave to retire and acquaint Don Egas and his daughter with your majesty's intentions."

"Nay, my good friend," said the king, smiling, "I hope you bear me no ill-will for this little disappointment; certainly it seems rather ungracious that the first favour you ask me should be postponed, be it for ever so short a period. Why, good heavens! it may increase your disinclination to make requests. Come, come—you will not be the worse for a short delay—time passes rapidly, and you will not, I am sure, deny my daughter this pleasure."

In spite of the friendly tone and manner that Don Pedro adopted in taking leave of Ferran,

the cavalier withdrew from his presence in a state of throbbing emotion. He was not prepared for the scene which had taken place—all his latent feelings were aroused, and, despite of his generous nature, he could not avoid looking on the king's denial with an eye of suspicious alarm. He clearly perceived that the pretence offered to delay the ceremony, was so shallow, that it could not impose on the weakest intellect. Don Pedro had plainly betrayed the interest he felt for Costanza. Through the imposing dignity of the sovereign the lover could easily be detected; and an involuntary shudder crept over Ferran as he reflected on the measureless woe that was in store, should his sad surmises be unfortunately realized.

Agitated, therefore, with conflicting passions, he hastened to communicate the result of his interview to Don Egas and Costanza: the latter evinced a greater degree of uneasiness than surprise at the tidings; but Don Egas could not well perceive that there was any great

cause for such uncommon demonstrations of disappointment.

"But, my dear friend," he said in a consolatory tone, "what signifies two months at a time of undisturbed tranquillity—a time unruffled by even a shadow of danger; you surely cannot be afraid of a second separation?"

"No, Don Egas," replied de Castro: "and yet my anxiety rests on no shallow foundation. Alas! the brilliant merit of your daughter might perhaps, in some degree, excuse the passion of the king."

"I do not understand you," returned Don Egas.

"Surely, Sir, you could not have been blind to the marked attentions paid to Costanza by Don Pedro?"

"No, certainly; but what conclusions do you draw therefrom?"

"The most natural: there was more than mere politeness and gallantry in his assiduities. Yes, Señor, my fears are too well

founded—the king feels a passion for your daughter!"

"Eh!—what?" exclaimed Don Egas, more in the tone of agreeable surprise than alarm and disappointment, "it cannot be."

"Ah! my honoured Sir, Costanza has more than sufficient merit to adorn a throne, and my apprehensions are certainly to be excused."

Don Ferran could not have adopted a less effectual method of interesting the courtly old cavalier in his own behalf. The better founded were the fears of De Castro the less moved did Don Egas appear at the consequences of the king's passion; and the asseveration that Costanza had more than sufficient merit to grace a throne, quite overset the little remaining prudence of the old cavalier. A sudden flash of ambition darted across his mind, and fired a train of towering thoughts, which seemed foreign to his nature. He already considered Don Pedro captivated with the charms of his daughter: and Don Pedro certainly was not the first king

who had married the daughter of a grandee, and there was no reason why Costanza should not ascend the throne of Castile. The most enchanting visions now sported before the old courtier's excited fancy, whilst the many involuntary signs of satisfaction which escaped him, at once amazed and wounded the feelings of De Castro.

The anxious lover was perfectly at a loss to account for this strange behaviour, being far from suspecting the ambitious nature of his friend's speculations. He gazed upon him in utter astonishment, in the expectation of obtaining a solution of this seeming anomaly. But Don Egas, buoyed on the wings of hope, had no idea of admitting a confident in his designs. Indeed, he quite forgot that Ferran was present; for his thoughts were intent upon a throne, with all its splendid appendages, that were to be showered upon him, for having the good fortune to be the parent of so accomplished a daughter.

Costanza saw these strange workings with inward distrust, for it was evident there was something extraordinary passing in the old courtier's mind, though of what nature she could not determine. Her surprise, as well as the perfect astonishment of her lover, were augmented, when Don Egas, after much communion with himself, began to smile in a congratulatory manner. He seemed to forget the presence of any other person, and every circumstance of the foregoing conversation, except what had so agreeably excited his flattering expectations; in a voice of triumph he exclaimed—

"It is very strange—very strange indeed! and yet why should it be strange? Good Heavens! what a fortunate event! Where is my daughter? Costanza!—Child!—Costanza!"

And so saying, he hied from the place in complete absence of mind.

"Well!" cried Ferran, "has the old man lost his wits? what can this mean, Costanza?"

" Some strange resolution," said Costanza, " hath surely possessed my father, and it can only, I fear, be productive of painful results. However, I must hasten to learn what has produced the extraordinary scene we have just witnessed. But, my dear Ferran," she added, with tendernes, " let not the importunity of the king disturb your repose, for, great as his power may be, the faith of Costanza shall never be impeached."

" No, Costanza, I never disgraced myself by harbouring a transient doubt of your affections; I am only concerned that you will have to endure his unceasing persecutions."

" Be tranquil on that head," she answered, smiling, and then hastened to her father, leaving her noble lover in a mood of unspeakable perplexity.

Despite of the loftiness of his mind, and the severe cast of his character, the Castilian was still a man, who deeply felt the softer emotions of the heart. He had placed all his hopes of

earthly happiness on one being; in her affection his heart had garnered up its treasure, and a remote idea of losing it excited the most harrowing sensations. Yet, with that manly fortitude which distinguished him, he summoned the whole energies of his soul to brave the trying difficulties that awaited him. He was secure in the entire devotedness of Costanza, which dispelled even the shadow of distrust from his mind, and he only waited to learn the sentiments of her parent, to adopt a line of conduct consonant with their mutual inclinations.

He had taken this resolution as he retraced his steps from the dwelling of Don Egas, when his thoughts were suddenly diverted to a very different subject. The earnest cries of a supplicating female caught his ear, and not without surprise he heard his own name several times repeated, in the shrill and broken accents of grief. He was about to inquire into the circumstance, when his steps were arrested by the

abrupt appearance of the mourner. The cavalier was rooted to the ground; the object that stood before him was highly calculated to awaken the most lively sentiments of pity in a generous breast. She was a woman of middle age, but who still bore the traces of beauty, spite of the horrible misery to which she seemed a prey. She was dressed in the most humble garments; her raven hair flowed loose and wildly over her shoulders; her piercing black eyes shot fitful glances of terror and despair; and there was about her whole person an air of wildness that justified the supposition of her being the victim of some hopeless grief.

As soon as she perceived Ferran de Castro, she threw herself violently on the ground, and firmly embraced his knees in all the fervour of a woman's anguish and distress.

"Oh! save him, save him!" she cried, with a frantic voice. "Don Ferran, in the name of God, stand by the unfortunate—for you are noble, and kind, and generous!"

"Good woman," said Ferran, "compose yourself, and let me know the object of your grief: for though you are a stranger to me, yet will I not refuse any assistance which it is in my power to give."

"God bless you for that!" fervently ejaculated the female. "Yes, yes, you will not abandon him in the hour of terror and death."

"But who is the person who creates such anxiety?"

"Alas! Señor, my husband—my poor husband—the father of my hapless children, is on the eve of execution: to-morrow I shall throw me on the ground and curse the light of day. I shall behold the little wretches that will vainly call for their father, and with their cries redouble my agony and my despair. Oh, God, Oh, God! the biting gripe of poverty I have endured, deeply have I tasted of sorrow, but for this last misfortune I was not prepared—never shall I have strength to sustain it."

As she said this, she cast a look of agonized

despair on the generous cavalier, wringing her hands in the convulsion of grief. The Castilian was strongly affected; he considered that he should not be justified in flattering her hopes. He knew the strictness of the king in the execution of justice, and the tears and despair of a poor woman, he was too sensible would not avail. On the other hand, he might be a victim sacrificed to erroneous opinion, and in that case his intercession with Don Pedro would not be ineffectual.

"Great as may be my desire to serve you," he said, in a soothing tone addressing the suppliant, whom he had raised from his feet, "I am afraid I cannot avert your misfortune, should your husband be charged with a crime of such a nature as to preclude the hope of mercy."

The woman shuddered, and sighed deeply. "Oh! blessed Virgin! pity, pity!" she frantically exclaimed. "My terrors are great, for he has killed a fellow-creature!"

"Murder!" exclaimed Ferran. "Alas! my poor woman, your appeal is desperate."

"Oh! no, no!" she eagerly continued. "No, in the name of mercy, do not utter such words. You can save him: he killed a man, but he is not a ruffian, or a murderer. No, no,—save him, save my poor husband!"

"What do you wish me to do?" inquired he, in a sad tone. "You know that the king will not swerve from the decree of the law, even at the intercession of a friend."

"The king! Ah! the king knows nothing of this proceeding: he is not rightly informed; and my poor husband will be dead before the particulars of his offence can be unfolded to him."

"But has Don Pedro signed the warrant of his death?"

"Yes, my lord," returned she, mournfully, "he signed his death-warrant amongst the list of other offenders."

"Then, what hope is there for you?"

"The king is just. Let him be acquainted with the whole circumstances of the case before my husband suffer. Oh! Don Ferran, as you hope for the mercy of God, deny not the humble prayer of the unfortunate. The king sits in audience to-morrow. Oh! beseech him to suspend the execution, until he himself shall have examined the prisoner and his accusers. A respite is all I demand. Do not deny me, good Señor: no, do not shut your ears to the sorrows of the wretched; so may God and the holy Virgin grant you grace and happiness!"

The Castilian felt agitated at this earnest appeal, and with difficulty lifted the woman from the ground, where she had again prostrated herself.

"I will immediately prefer your request to the king," he said, with kindness. "And if there is a way to save your husband, without infringing the dictates of justice—"

"A respite is all I ask!" said she, eagerly nterrupting Ferran.

"Then, follow me. I will take you to the king, that from your own mouth he may hear your prayer; and, in the mean time, you will tell me the name of your husband, and how he committed the crime that has brought him into this dreadful peril."

"Yes, Don Ferran; but let us lose no time. Oh! forgive the rude importunities of a poor wretch like me. Come—Heaven will reward you for this: the mercy you shew me will be recorded in the book of mercies."

Ferran de Castro strove not to oppose her just impatience; but with a heart throbbing with emotion, took the way to the Alcazar, accompanied by the unfortunate woman.

CHAPTER III.

THE SENTENCE.

"O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!"
SHAKSPEARE.

ON the following day the king was sitting to give state audience. He was surrounded by the principal magistrates and nobles; and the court was thronged with a vast concourse of people, eager to hear those decisions which had acquired for the king the name of "*El Justiciero.*" The countenance of Don Pedro at this moment was grave and composed, tinctured with a shade of sternness, which only added to

the expression of hauteur and dignity which he possessed in such an eminent degree. He had banished from his features that sarcastic smile, which occasionally curled his lip, and that expression of bitter mirth, which, at intervals, was wont to accompany the delivery of strong and impassioned language. An awful silence presided over the place, interrupted only now and then by a smothered whisper or a slightly confused murmur. Some important decrees had already been issued. Don Ferran and some of the nobles seemed disconcerted, and the features of the king were fixed in stern tranquillity.

Don Pedro had given orders for the execution of Don Martin Yañez and Micer Gil Bocanegra; and those that now surrounded the king were in a state of terror: for, conscious as they were of having offended, they trembled lest his vindictive temper should be no longer restrained even by the presence of the Black Prince.

This gloomy silence, however, was now

broken by a tumultuous clamour at the entrance of the court—the officers of justice began to cry "*Plaza! plaza!*" and presently it was perceived that the criminal was brought before the king.

"Ferran, here he comes at length," said Don Pedro: "we shall see if his case will bear any extenuation; otherwise, the tears of the despairing widow will fall in vain."

The prisoner, heavily charged with irons, was conducted in front of the tribunal. His appearance seemed to have awakened a simultaneous movement of horror: the multitude testified their abhorrence by ill-suppressed execrations, whilst a few voices only were there that mingled the tones of pity with the detestation displayed towards the unfortunate culprit. He, however, stood fearless and erect, seemingly unmoved by these testimonies of ill-will. He appeared to wait his fate with calm resolution, and to have made up his mind to the approaching crisis: he was in a state of utter destitution,

and his whole person manifested the extreme of want and misery. The sickly hue of disease had superseded even his swarthy complexion ; and his sunken eye and livid lip imparted to his hard features an expression of subdued feeling and resignation, rather calculated to excite the emotions of compassion and pity than of anger. It was the *zapatero* Rufino.

" Let the accusers stand forward," cried the king.

Forthwith a host of ecclesiastics of all degrees hurried on, mingled with some of the lower classes. A confused murmur arose at the movement, which, however, soon subsided into awful silence. A religious terror seemed to pervade the assembly, and some of the spectators fixed dreadful looks of zealous indignation on the culprit, who alone appeared unmoved.

" Why is this man condemned to death ?" inquired the king.

" Señor," replied the canon Agraz, who

acted as the accuser, "the sinful man is to suffer in virtue of a sentence given at the tribunal of Seville."

"I ask, why is this man condemned to death?" repeated the king, in a stern voice.

"For a most horrible offence, so please your highness, even for sacrilege and murder."

A simultaneous murmur of horror ran through the assemblage. Don Pedro cast a withering look on the criminal.

"Alas! may God pardon him!" resumed the priest; "but this miserable man has imbrued his hands in the blood of the Lord's anointed: he has barbarously and impiously murdered a canon of our chapter of Seville."

"A heinous offence," said the king, gravely. Then addressing himself to the prisoner, he added, "Dost thou deny this charge?"

"No, Señor," firmly replied the *zapatero.*

"Then thou dost admit the murder?"

"I killed the priest, it is true," returned Rufino.

The murmurs increased—symptoms of confusion were observable; when the king, who perceived the commotion, stood up, and with a terrible voice suddenly restored order.

"Who, or what art thou?" demanded the king.

"My name is Rufino Diez, by trade a *zapatero*."*

"A *zapatero* kill a priest!—horror! impious!" cried some voices.

"What induced thee to commit so dark a crime?" demanded the king.

"Oh, please your majesty," interposed the canon, "it is well known he bore a mortal enmity to our unfortunate companion."

"Señor *Canonigo*," cried Don Pedro, with stern composure, "I beg you will answer only in your turn. Explain the reasons that led you to this act."

Rufino now collected himself for a moment—then, with a firm, unbroken voice, began—

* Shoemaker.

"I am an unfortunate man, but not the impious heretic that the people suppose me, and that some ministers of God have laboured to make them believe. It is true I killed a priest; but the deadly act sprung not from wanton cruelty, nor from a desire of despoiling him of his property. Till the commission of that deed I had been an humble, but an honest man. The crime which fills all with horror was taught me by the very priest for whose death I stand here accused!"

"What meanest thou?" demanded Don Pedro.

"The impious wretch," cried one of the ecclesiastics, with zealous rage, "is inspired by Satan to slander in addition to his sacrilegious murder!"

"What means this disrespect?" exclaimed the king, with indignation. "Are you tired of breathing the air of life? Another imprudent observation, and you shall be confined in the *carcel* of Seville: prisoner, continue your recital."

"I had a father, loved and esteemed by all who knew him; the old man was dearer to these eyes than the light of day; in an evil hour he drew upon himself the malevolence of the priest. His offence I never knew. In the dead of night I was awakened by dying groans; with fearful trepidation I hurried to the spot. God! what a sight presented itself! my venerable father was stretched on the ground, weltering in his blood. Death was close upon him; but Heaven in its mercy allowed him strength to pronounce the name of the assassin. I flew in pursuit of him—I detected him, still bloody, still holding the fearful testimony of his crime. The proofs were strong against him, and he was committed to prison. He was tried, the murder was proved against him, and yet the assassin was suffered to escape the punishment due to his crime: he lived to mock me—to revile the memory of my murdered parent!"

"By Santiago!" said the king, "if the *zapatero's* statement be true, this is a case care

fully to be considered. Now mind me, man, shouldst thou have perjured thyself, good cause wilt thou have to tremble ! Dost thou adhere to the veracity of thy words ?"

" Yes, in my hopes of Heaven ! And I will be ready to sustain the worst of tortures, should any falsehood be detected in my story."

The archbishop, with the dean and chapter, now advanced nearer in front.

" By what tribunal was the late canon tried ?" inquired Don Pedro of the principal accuser.

" By the ecclesiastical," was the reply.

" What !" exclaimed the king, with warmth, " his crime was fully proved, and yet he was suffered to escape ! I marvel, *Señores eclesiasticos*, that you, who are such strenuous advocates for justice, should not set the example in your own tribunal. How came this murder to be left unpunished ?"

" Unpunished, Señor !" cried the dean ; " that miserable man sadly imposes upon your high-

ness: instead of directing his thoughts to repentance and the dreadful eternity that awaits him, he endeavours to scandalize the memory of his victim, as though it could lessen the horror of his crime: it is true that our frail brother was charged with the unfortunate occurrence that—"

"What unfortunate occurrence?" demanded Don Pedro, surprised.

"The death of the prisoner's father."

"Heaven defend us! good Señor Dean," exclaimed Don Pedro, in a bitter tone of irony; "methinks you are very choice in the selection of your terms: call you the assassination of an innocent man only an unfortunate occurrence? Proceed, Sir, we shall hear something better anon!"

"With respect to the prisoner's statement," continued the dean, in confusion, "of the defunct priest having been suffered to escape with impunity, it is most scandalously false; the tribunal could never be guilty of so flagrant an omission in the

distribution of justice, and the offender was accordingly most severely dealt with."

"Well," said the king, "that is a different account: now be pleased to acquaint us with the nature of the punishment inflicted on the delinquent canon."

"It was one," resumed the dean, with a sorrowful look, "well calculated deeply to wound the feelings of a minister of God: the unfortunate man was suspended in his holy functions, and prevented from saying mass for the term of a whole year. This sentence he was rigorously undergoing when he was inhumanly murdered by the *zapatero*."

"Now, I cannot but applaud," said Don Pedro, in a calm, sarcastic tone, "the wisdom of the ecclesiastical tribunal. During my reign no offence shall be left unpunished. *Zapatero*, you have seen clearly that the assassin of your father was really and adequately punished: it is now meet that you should prepare humbly to suffer the sentence I am about to award."

The whole court sat in breathless silence; the king proceeded—

"The *zapatero*, Rufino Diez, is condemned to shut up his shop, and remain for the term of a whole year without making shoes."

Symptoms of the utmost astonishment and disappointment were exhibited by the numerous concourse around. Some applauded the shrewd impartiality of the king; but the greater part, with the clergy, were horror-struck at the apparent levity and even impiety of the decision. The archbishop covered his face, the dean and chapter raised their eyes to heaven, and some of their followers even began to murmur.

Don Pedro suddenly rose, and casting a fierce glance around, in a voice of thunder he exclaimed—

"Who is it that dares to murmur at the decrees of justice? If any one be dissatisfied with the sentence, let him advance and explain his reasons—they shall be answered."

Silence was restored, but no one advanced.

"Rufino Diez," pursued the king, "thou art at liberty; but mind thou be strict in the fulfilment of the sentence, for thy life shall answer the least omission. Officers, release the prisoner from his irons, and let him depart in peace.(1) Now let the court be cleared, and you, misguided fools," he added, addressing the low people, "learn to appreciate better the judgment of your king, who considers your claims to his impartial justice equal to those of the powerful and great of his kingdom."

The assemblage now broke up, deeply impressed with the extraordinary sentence given by the king. But though approved and highly extolled by many, yet, strange to say, those in defence of whose rights it had been given were the first and most active in their dissatisfaction. Indeed, most of the humble classes looked with horror at what they considered an impious award: and their erroneous zeal being opportunely fanned by the disappointed and humbled

canons, they felt more than ever convinced that Don Pedro was the worst of infidels, as well as the greatest of tyrants.

They were therefore very well disposed to listen to the insinuations of deep and subtle plotters, should the time prove favourable for another conspiracy. Some of the most ambitious grandees, despite of the apparent destruction of their cause, still clung with fondness to the shadow of hope; they were highly gratified at the conduct of the king, for they knew how to turn to advantage this incident, by playing upon the ignorance and credulity of the people.

The ruling passion of the king for arbitrary and tyrannic sway, tended not a little to favour their designs. The deaths of the Treasurer Don Martin Yañez, and the Admiral Micer Gil Bocanegra, were considered as incontrovertible proofs of the king's unabated sanguinary disposition; the confiscations which he had made

of the property of those nobles who had been the most active in the rebellion, was represented as the effects of a most vindictive nature.

Besides, from the commencement of this king's unfortunate reign, the many difficulties with which he had to cope, the errors and indiscretions of his youth, and the neglect of his tutor, Alburquerque, were all brought forward as so many proofs of crime, and were used by the turbulent and ambitious to fan the flame of discontent. They considered the time favourable for again prosecuting their plans of aggrandisement, and took advantage of every new measure of the king, which partook of violence, although perhaps driven to it by their own misdeeds, to forward their views, under the garb of zeal for the good of their country.

We will not enter into the subject any further than to observe, that the conversion of most of these plotters to the royal party could not be sincere. The victory of Don Pedro had paralyzed the hostile efforts of their arms, but

had no dominion over their minds. The rooted prejudice, the wild dream of ambition, had not been subdued, when they were compelled to yield their swords to the victor. In strong minds, reared in turbulence and schooled in conspiracy, repeated checks only serve to retard, not to defeat their object; the means are removed—not the desire. The vital principle still remains; and this can only be extinguished by death. It is therefore easy to conclude that the vanquished grandees still sought to favour disaffection. Accordingly, as skilful plotters, they offered not the least impediment to the king in his sanguinary decrees, which were now becoming very frequent. They knew that repeated effusion of blood, would at length excite the indignation of the Black Prince, whose presence in Spain paralyzed the efforts of the conspirators, as it seemed at once to curb the temper of Don Pedro and strike awe into the hearts of the more timid malcontents. The removal of the prince from Spain was therefore a primary

object of consideration: his departure they awaited with anxiety, and they sedulously endeavoured to expedite it, by the most insidious attempts to injure him in the mind of Don Pedro. Unhappily this was not particularly difficult; for the temper of the king seconded their sinister exertions. Every day, some new act of violence, or some overbearing decree came to light: the least trivial incident was then eagerly seized, and commented on, so that it acquired strength as it passed onwards. Rumours like this could not fail to produce an indelible impression upon the mind of the individual to whom they were directed.

Don Pedro perceived the difficulty of his position: he read the thoughts of his insidious enemies, his suspicions were excited, and his ardent and furious temper was rendered doubly susceptible. Instead, however, of obviating the evils that threatened his security, by adopting those prudent measures which might acquire for him a powerful party among his subjects, as

well as secure the friendship and good-will of his allies, he yielded himself to the baneful suggestions of his own natural inclination; and daily afforded fresh materials for the construction of that fabric, which, when once reared, would fall with tremendous force, and crush him under its ruins. The deaths of Doña Urraca de Osorio and Don Pedro Ponceda Leon, greatly aggravated the danger of his position: the apparent cruelty of these measures alarmed his subjects. It was the renewal of bloodshed; suspicion created fear—fear, its natural consequence—the desire of providing the means of self-preservation. The powerful engines of superstition and ignorance were actively at work; and the high clergy lost no opportunity of wielding to advantage these terrible weapons.

Still the schemes of the conspirators advanced but slowly; some of their more cautious or more timid partizans were shy to embark in the enterprize, until they foresaw a greater proba-

bility of success. They had received intelligence that Trastamara was safe in France, and him they naturally considered the nucleus of their enterprize. But Trastamara was deprived of the means of resuming the contest for the crown of Castile. Bertrand Duguesclin and his best knights had been taken prisoners in the battle of Najara, by the English, and they could not be liberated without paying their ransom. Besides, in the conditions of their liberation, it was probable the Black Prince would stipulate that they should not take up arms for a repetition of the contest. All these obstacles were strongly opposed to the success of the conspirators, but still they did not despair of seeing them ultimately removed.

Meantime, they assembled in secret societies to discuss their opinions, and provide means for the successful prosecution of their undertaking. An active correspondence was kept up with Don Enrique, who lost no opportunity of raising their expectations by the most brilliant

promises and assurances of immediate support. Whilst these treasonable designs were in progress, Don Pedro gave loose to his ill-governed passions. He was intoxicated with the charms of Costanza, and seemed to forget the important services of the noble cavalier, whose feelings he was deeply wounding by his ungenerous conduct. The attentions of the king were now so marked and unremitting, that his passion was no longer a secret to any initiated in the mysteries of the Alcazar. This was a source of rankling grief to the noble De Castro and his accomplished mistress; and their distress was doubly heightened by the consciousness that Don Egas, instead of checking the king's attachment to his daughter, shewed an undisguised inclination to favour his addresses. The sanguine hopes of the old cavalier already flattered him with the probability that his daughter would be elevated to the throne. Don Egas had not yet dared, however, openly to avow his wishes; and he still continued to treat Ferran

with the same shew of friendship; for spite of his dissimulation, it was easy to perceive that he had no wish or intention to lose the lesser prize until he was perfectly secure of the greater. These speculations may appear unworthy of one, who in other respects possessed some meritorious qualities; yet, though calculated to inspire contempt in frank and open minds, they lose, in scenes of active life, their despicable character under the disguise in which they appear.

Men of a more energetic tone of mind than Don Egas would have been flattered by the repeated testimonies of kindness which the old cavalier experienced from the king. His attendance at court was most assiduous; and the enamoured Don Pedro eagerly availed himself of every occasion of gaining so powerful an auxiliary to his interest, as the father of her he admired. The vanity and ambition of the old Castilian were gratified; the prospect of grandeur and power flattered his mind with the most

extravagant illusions. Still the king had not clearly stated the nature of his views, but the deluded cavalier never doubted his intentions. The pride of the Castilian forbade his entertaining any idea derogatory to his honour; and he firmly believed that with proper management, a crown would be the reward of his daughter's merit.

Impressed with these ideas Don Egas already assumed a prouder air, and passed the intermediate moments in placid and undisturbed content. He had fixed his mind on the attainment of one grand, dazzling object, and every little incident he very industriously interpreted as favourable to his desires. It was, indeed, evident that Don Egas was gaining ground in the favour of the king, in proportion as Ferran de Castro was losing it. Don Pedro became more reserved towards his old favourite and faithful adherent: he began to consider him in the light of a rival, and a rival, too, who possessed the favour of the object of his passion. He now viewed him as a

presumptuous subject, who boldly stood in the way of the good pleasure of his sovereign.

The character and conduct also of Don Ferran contributed to increase this unfavourable impression, and to sharpen the sting which it inflicted. The noble Castilian had, throughout this proceeding, observed a line of conduct exceedingly irksome to a king: he had always behaved with respect, but never lost an opportunity of testifying the extent of his wounded feelings.

Indeed, all his remarks were impressed with that stamp of integrity and noble pride congenial to a high soul; and he fearlessly expressed his sense of Don Pedro's ungenerous usage. Ferran de Castro possessed, in a high degree, the quality of strict veracity; and in the free disclosure of his sentiments, he naturally incurred the displeasure and resentment of Don Pedro. Disagreeable truths are disgusting to all men, but particularly to men in power. Thus it was with Don Pedro: he began to feel the continual presence of the man he sought to

injure as a sort of intrusion; and he could ill brook the expression of mingled sorrow and indignation, too strongly apparent in his features.

This was no secret to the young cavalier; but he prudently adhered to a conduct which, without incurring the imputation of weakness, sufficiently secured him from the open vengeance and violence of the king. Besides, the term specified by Don Pedro for the celebration of the nuptials of Doña Beatriz with the Duke of Lancaster was now near at hand. Ferran de Castro patiently awaited the moment to resume his request. The evasion of the king could then no longer be misinterpreted, and he would be compelled to adopt such a course as his critical situation might demand.

CHAPTER IV.

PLOTTING.

"Cuor ben dentro
Investigate; e nel profondo petto
Vedrete ogni uom l'odio covar, la vostra
Rovina; ognun giuravi infamia e morte."

ALFIERI.

SEVILLE was in a state of continued excitement at the idea of the approaching festival. In the Alameda, and along the banks of the Guadalquiver, for the space of a league, immense preparations were making to celebrate the princely nuptials with becoming pomp and solemnity. A whole week was to be devoted to an uninterrupted succession of public festivity and

amusement. A tournay, a tilting, and other martial games were announced; and many splendid tents and pavilions were erected for the accommodation of the numerous guests who were expected.

At the sight of these preparations Don Egas could not disguise his inward joy; the genius of ambition was constantly whispering in his ear his anticipation of the most brilliant prospects. He gladly and eagerly received every suggestion that flattered his vanity, however wild and extravagant, and he really began to fancy that the splendour and magnificence displayed in the arrangements for the festival, were a sure proof that the king himself intended to surprise his subjects, by presenting to them a queen, and that the bride elect could be no other than Costanza. The king was in the prime of life, just entering his thirty-fourth year, and he had been attracted by her surpassing beauty and accomplishments; the natural conclusion, according to Don Egas, was of course—marriage.

These pleasing visions were now and then disagreeably disturbed by the less welcome thoughts of Ferran. He was a provoking obstacle to the completion of the old cavalier's fondest wishes.

The arrangements between the young lovers were so nearly concluded, that Don Egas, spite of the pliability of his temper, could not but feel an inward pang of shame at the idea of opposing a match which he had himself so zealously endeavoured to promote. His situation was really perplexing; a remaining particle of honest pride still feebly struggled with the more powerful attractions of ambition. In this dilemma he wisely imagined that nothing could be more efficient in silencing his conscience, than to observe a neutrality in the affair. He would not recommend his daughter to listen to the king, but at the same time he would afford no encouragement to the claims of De Castro. How strictly he adhered to his resolution will presently be seen. Don Egas hastened to his daughter, ostensibly with the view of learning

her real inclination, but more, in fact, to importune her, indirectly, on a subject, to the painful nature of which she had on more than one occasion testified her extreme aversion.

"Now, my Costanza," said Don Egas, smiling, "what do you think of these magnificent preparations?—they betoken some unusual festival—eh?"

"Surely, Sir," replied Costanza, "the marriage of a royal princess with the illustrious brother of Edward of Wales, is sufficient reason to justify those arrangements, were they even more brilliant."

"Why, yes—that's true," returned Don Egas. "But are you certain the king himself has no idea of affording an example to the Duke of Lancaster?"

"I cannot, Señor, enter into the feelings or ideas of the king," answered Costanza, with great composure.

"Ah! child, you affect to misunderstand what is no longer a secret at court, and this

wilful ignorance with your kind parent, is certainly inexcusable. The king loves you, Costanza—yes, and you know the extent of his passion!"

"Father! how long will you afflict me with a subject which you are aware can produce nothing but the most painful sensations. Even should Don Pedro feel the passion which you perhaps erroneously suppose, what inference would you draw from that circumstance?"

Costanza put this question with a look and tone of such dignified steadiness, that the old cavalier was greatly embarrassed.

"My dear child," he at length said, "if you really mean to interrogate my experience and knowledge of the world, I must acquaint you with the nature of my thoughts. It strikes me—nay, I am perfectly sure—that the king is about to offer you his hand and crown."

A look of mingled sorrow and resentment was the only answer to this observation. But Don Egas, not perceiving, or affecting not to

perceive, the impression produced by his declaration, continued:

"Certainly the event would not be of unusual occurrence, and I think therefore that my hopes are justified."

"Hopes! father! Oh! Heavens—and is it possible you can entertain such thoughts?"

"Why not, my dear child? You cannot but be aware of my affection for you, and surely I cannot be blamed for consulting your welfare and—"

"Señor," interrupted Costanza, proudly, "even under the supposition that the king should evince any inclination to what I dare venture to say you have only imagined, I am sensible you will never forget your word to Don Ferran."

"Don Ferran!—oh, yes. Why, really, Don Ferran is a noble cavalier—my friend—my very dear friend; but he is too generous and too sensible to take umbrage at his king. Besides, I do not by any means shew any disinclination

to Don Ferran. No, no, you must not misunderstand me. I mean to observe a perfect neutrality in this case; I will be a mere cipher —I shall let things take their course; therefore, my dear Costanza, look upon me as a most indulgent father: and if I should counsel you sometimes, why then you must attribute it to my solicitude for your welfare. Now you know we are to sup with the king: let me advise you to behave towards him with courtesy, and not to receive his kind and gallant demonstrations with such coldness."

"I hope, Sir, I shall not incur the imputation of neglecting those duties which the king has a right to command."

"Well, well, I wish you to consider our relative position, and how desirable it would be to—"

"In sooth, dear father," said Costanza, smiling, "I am afraid you are breaking your neutrality."

"No, no, I am neutral: let the king and Ferran fight their own battles; delicacy forbids that I should exert any undue influence over

you. No, I shall observe a perfect neutrality. So, my child, I must leave you; but remember what I have said. Don Pedro, despite of the many calumnies circulated to his disadvantage, is, in my opinion, a very accomplished cavalier, and deserves to be treated with great consideration. For my part, I think him generous and just, clever and brave as the Cid, to say nothing of his personal endowments; but I must be neutral—I will say nothing in his favour."

"Do you know, Sir, if Don Ferran is invited to this supper?'

"I really do not; but, at all events, prudence will prescribe the line of conduct you ought to adopt. Ferran is my friend, but then we must not forget our duty to the king; again I recommend you to behave in a manner not to offend the pride of Don Pedro; recollect the great honour conferred on our family should he —but no—I must be neutral—good bye, child but do not forget my instructions."

It is superfluous to observe, that Don Egas, notwithstanding his neutrality, never lost an

opportunity of directing the thoughts of his daughter to the same ambitious height to which his own so wildly soared; but, happily, all his manœuvres and inuendos were either not understood or decidedly failed in effect.

Don Pedro, nevertheless, continued his addresses to Costanza, for his unremitting attentions could now be called by no other name. Swayed by self-will, and carried away by his fiery passions, he stayed not to reflect that he might awaken the just resentment of his most faithful adherent, and make him his bitter enemy; and that he had already but too few sincere friends, wantonly to lose one so essential to the support of his cause. For, despite of appearances, Don Pedro felt by no means firmly seated on the throne; an apparent tranquillity reigned in Castile, but he knew it was more the effect of compulsion than of inclination. Every one wore a smiling face—content and pleasure seemed to hold dominion; but these were only like the gay and flowery margin that covers a

precipice, and beguiles the traveller to his ruin. Whilst the king spent his days in forming plans to satisfy his inordinate love of pleasure, or in exercising his vengeance, his secret enemies, awed, but not subdued, by the presence of the Black Prince, secretly continued their treasonable practices. The deaths of several grandees had exasperated those of their class, and the clergy had grown indignant at the king's sentence in the trial of the *zapatero*.

Several of the most powerful members of these two classes assembled under the cover of night to concert their measures. One of the most subtle, active, and intelligent of the conspirators was the Arcediano* Rivera. It was in his dwelling that most of these meetings were held. At the very time that the king was yielding himself to thoughts of love and pleasure, and Don Egas to the most flattering dreams, the Arcediano and his companions had assembled in conclave. A large, spacious apartment, in a

* The Archdeacon.

sequestered part of the city, was the place of meeting. Here, at the dead of night, were seen sitting, by the reflection of a sombre lamp, about twenty persons, whose dress and deportment bespoke a band of desperate and lawless ruffians, but who, notwithstanding, belonged to the highest rank in society. As a measure of precaution, they had adopted the most uncouth disguises; and, to avoid the vigilance of the adherents of the king, they took care neither to assemble in great numbers, nor to repair to the rendezvous in groups. A dismal silence pervaded the place at this moment. The nocturnal congregation seemed in anxious expectation of some arrival; looks of anxiety were exchanged every time the clock tolled the hour; each seemed to commune with his own thoughts upon some important enterprise. At length, a man of mean appearance, who had served as scout, came in joyous haste to announce some important intelligence.

"He is come—he is safe," said he, in a low tone.

"Heaven be blessed!" ejaculated the Arcediano, with fervour.

"Amen!" responded the whole assembly.

"Introduce him instantly," now said a fierce-looking man.

Presently the long expected person was ushered in; he was a young cavalier of gallant appearance, enveloped in a long cloak. This he threw by, and began to embrace his associates.

"Welcome, welcome to Spain, Señor Don Alvar!" cried several of them.

"We began to grow apprehensive for your safety," said one. "Thank God, we have nothing to fear now," observed another, nevertheless casting around a most suspicious look.

"Now, Don Alvar," exclaimed the Arcediano, "unfold the instructions you bring from our good king Don Enrique—how is he?"

"In perfect health and safety. The French have warmly espoused his cause, though at present they are not able to afford him aid. Indeed, the time is not yet propitious to act—the presence of these English knights is a most serious obstacle to the enterprise."

"It is in sooth!" interposed Don Ramiro Tellez, a tall, gaunt man; "however, they cannot remain for ever in Spain, and we shall endeavour to expedite their departure. Indeed Don Pedro, instigated partly by his own outrageous conduct, and partly by our subtle manœuvres, is taking the most efficacious means of disgusting his allies. We shall, with the help of God, be soon rid of this nuisance!"

"The captivity of Bertrand Duguesclin," interposed another, "and of his best knights, is another difficulty we must surmount. Has Don Enrique found means of communicating with him?"

"Yes," replied Don Alvar: "although most

vigilantly watched by his guards at Guienne, Don Enrique, in the disguise of a pilgrim, has fortunately had an interview with that gallant knight, and he is ready to join our cause, as soon as he shall find himself at liberty. Be of good cheer, my noble friends, for the tyrant's ruin is decreed, and no power will be able to avert it!"

"His temper," observed Don Juan de Silva, "cannot be broken by misfortune, and prosperity has served only to make him more despotic. No doubt his late cruelties have come to your knowledge."

"Alas!" answered Don Alvar, "I am too nearly interested in the death of some of the victims—my kinswoman, Doña Urraca's fate, cannot but fill every one with horror."(4)

"Horrible! horrible!" said the canon Agraz, I administered to her the last consolations of religion previous to her setting out for the Alameda, where she was so inhumanly burnt."

"So Heaven and Santiago grant me aid,"

warmly exclaimed Don Alvar, "but the tyrant shall meet the recompense due to his crimes. Aye! never will I rest until his ruin be accomplished. The lords of the castle of Peñafiet and others, have likewise joined us, and are prepared to declare themselves against Don Pedro at the first summons; but how stand the public affected? for ye know full well that the tyrant pretends to favour the lower classes, to secure partisans amongst them, a policy which he insidiously honours with the title of impartial justice."

"Yes, in direct violation of our privileges," exclaimed the arcediano. "Some bold measure is indispensable to terrify the people, and nothing surely can be more efficient than the thunders of the church. Don Alvar you have been at Avignon?"

"I went in person, charged with the important commission," returned Don Alvar.

"And how was his Holiness, Urban the Vth, affected by our representations?"

"As it behoveth," replied Don Alvar. "He considered how manifold were the injuries of which the pious clergy of Castile had to complain; and the enormous and repeated excesses of Don Pedro render him obnoxious to the most dreadful punishment. Accordingly he approves of their zeal, and grants a bull of excommunication, putting him under an interdict, and absolving his subjects from their oath of allegiance. Here is the bull to that purport."(5)

Saying this, Don Alvar delivered to the canons a roll, bearing the seal of his Holiness. At this sight a promiscuous murmur of joy and approbation broke from every one, and they began to congratulate each other, as if the most important victory had been obtained.

"This indeed," cried the arcediano, raising the document on high, "shall be a most disastrous instrument to work the downfal of Don Pedro. Aye! more shall he have to fear from this apparently useless scroll, than from the combined lance and sword of his most inveterate enemies. Thanks

to God and our blessed Lady, his holy mother, this is as it should be. The partisans of Don Pedro, when they fearlessly plunge into the thickest of their enemy, where a thousand sharpened points menace death, shall recoil with dread from the awful and formidable words of excommunication."

"This is, indeed, a most material point gained," observed the tall man of sinister appearance; "this engine must be put to work with the utmost expedition."

"Be not precipitate, Don Jayme," replied the arcediano; "we ought to watch for a favourable opportunity: the archbishop is now unfortunately confined by illness, and he must be apprized, and messengers must be ready to carry the intelligence to our friends at Toledo, Valladolid, and Calahorra. By striking sure we strike twice; no occasion can be more fortunate for our design than the approaching festival of the nuptials of the princess with the foreign Duke of Lancaster. An innumerable

multitude will be assembled to celebrate the festivities by the bank of the Guadalquiver, and there, amid their pomp and vanity, it will strike terror into the minds of the assembled people to hear a minister of God denouncing the crimes of the despot, and hurling against him the terrible thunders of the church."

"Bravely spoken," said Don Alvar: "the delay cannot be long, since the marriage is to be celebrated in a few days."

"Certainly," said the canon Agraz; "but it would be advisable to suffer several days to pass in these festivities, and afford time for the tyrant to commit some fresh act of violence, which doubtless he will not fail to do; the awful denunciation will then strike with double force, by the fitness of the occasion."

"Besides, we ought to consider," said the dean, "that the brutal and rash temper of Don Pedro may not even respect the voice of the church. He has more than once despised our admonitions, sinner as he is. Therefore, some

measures of precaution ought to be taken to ensure safety to the holy minister of the church entrusted with that important charge."

This observation created visible signs of alarm among the ecclesiastical portion of the assembly. They exchanged sundry intelligent looks, and appeared not over pleased with the idea of being ostensibly connected with the proceeding, for, however zealous they might be in the cause of religion, they, nevertheless, evinced a greater inclination to be reckoned in the list of confessors than of martyrs.

Indeed, if we may be allowed a very homely comparison, they were somewhat in the situation of the mice and cat in the fable.

"The honour of exercising this sacred function," said Don Alvar, "devolves upon the arcediano Don Veremundo Rivera."

The arcediano started at these words, for he would very willingly have dispensed with the distinguished honour.

"Pardon me, Don Alvar," said he, in an

humble tone, " this duty belongs of right to priests more deserving than I, and who rank higher among the dignitaries of the church. The archbishop of Seville himself must be the interpreter of the Lord's will on the present occasion. But even should his grace be prevented by illness, which is extremely probable, the dean of the chapter of Seville ought to be chosen for so honourable a duty before me."

" God preserve you in his holy keeping!" replied the dean, in a mild, weak voice: " your kindness is misplaced when speaking of so poor a being as myself—we must waive etiquette. God knows that amongst my many frailties and imperfections, I have not the vanity and arrogance to claim those sublime functions. No, no: even should your good opinion compel me to acquiesce, consider that neither my protracted age, nor my very enfeebled voice and memory render me a suitable person for the occasion. I certainly would transfer this honour to our dear brother the magistral, (6) whose

great strength and powers of eloquence are vastly more adapted to such an undertaking."

"Nay, Señor Dean," replied the magistral, bowing low, "you rate my humble talents too high: and I cannot, under any consideration, accept a privilege of which I consider myself totally unworthy."

"I admire," said Don Alvar, "the humble spirit so becoming in the ministers of God, and which seems to actuate all the members here assembled; but you are aware the excommunication must be put in force!"

"Oh! certainly," cried several voices.

"And some one, however unworthy he may think himself of the mission, must nevertheless charge himself with it. I then am enabled to solve the difficulty, for his Holiness himself has chosen the delegate for this important function: these credentials will make good my assertion." A breathless silence prevailed amongst the ecclesiastics. "The arcediano is the minister to

whose zeal and piety is commended the charge of excommunicating Don Pedro, King of Castile, in the absence of Don Enrique."

The arcediano was thunderstruck at this intelligence, and his colleagues began to breathe with freedom.

"Certainly," said the dean, "the arcediano is the most proper person; his zeal—his well-known piety—"

"His discretion—his influence," added the magistral.

"The arcediano!—The arcediano!" cried the canon Agraz.

"The arcediano!" repeated every one, joyfully.

The arcediano, notwithstanding the honour conferred upon him, did not seem to entertain a proper estimation of the good-will evinced towards him; and laid little stress on these violent panegyrics. Still, he could not disobey the commands of his holiness, and he was compelled therefore to submit. The only specu-

lation which now occupied his mind, was, how he should proceed in the fulfilment of his duty with perfect security to his precious person. The violent temper of Don Pedro might not respect even a delegate of the church; and in that case, the denunciator of God's vengeance might himself encounter, in his body, the fate which he was about to pronounce upon the royal sinner's soul.

"And now," resumed Don Alvar, "I must be favoured with a faithful list of all the grandees and *ricos-omes* willing to second our cause; I must carry, without loss of time, this document to Don Enrique."

"Our numbers daily increase," said Don Juan de Silva; "but could we by some fortunate chance, gain over that proud Don Ferran de Castro, our cause would acquire an inestimable reinforcement. He is highly appreciated by the people, his retainers are numerous, and altogether, he is one of the most influential men in Castile."

"No, no; his prejudices," replied Don Alvar, "are so firmly rooted in favour of the tyrant, that it would be impossible to make him our own. Nay, even to attempt his conversion, would be attended with the most imminent danger."

"Perhaps not so imminent as formerly," returned the first speaker, with a significant smile: "the firmest rocks are known to break, and the hardest iron is softened by the fire; man is neither rock nor iron: he may always be attacked successfully in one point; and he who resists the voice of ambition or interest, may be stimulated by outraged feelings—by a spirit of revenge."

"Such spirit never entered the mind of Ferran de Castro," said Don Alvar; "for though my bitter enemy, nay, my rival, I must confess the truth. But you, Señor, seem to speak in parables; what mean you by outraged feelings?"

"What! has the fact of Don Pedro's love

for Ferran's fair mistress not yet come to your knowledge? It is no secret in Seville, at least; some even assert, that the daughter of that old pliable driveller, Don Egas, will share the crown of Castile!"

Don Alvar was astounded at this unexpected intelligence. "Is it possible?" he cried, in surprise: "The king addressing Costanza!"

"Aye! in very troth he is; though it is asserted the lady does not treat him with equal cordiality: however, he is a king, and his unruly passions may lead him to commit any violence. So you see, Señor Don Alvar, that my hopes of gaining Don Ferran to our cause are not entirely without foundation. By playing upon his wounded feelings, he may be led to join against the ungrateful despot, who repays his services with such ingratitude."

Don Alvar remained some time silent, for the information he had received perplexed and alarmed him. He still cherished his unfortunate passion for Costanza, for though the deep

and intricate undertakings in which he was involved, might have diverted his attention from her, yet the love of his youth was by no means extinguished. Other feelings also served to heighten Don Alvar's hatred to the king, neither did he feel amicably disposed towards De Castro, whom he still considered as a favoured rival.

He was, however, compelled to smother his private feelings, in pursuance of the high mission with which he had been entrusted by Trastamara.

Accordingly, assuming an air of composure, he began to explain the various plans in operation to carry their undertakings into effect. Every one appeared zealous in the cause, except the arcediano, who had been suddenly visited by a fit of the most abstruse reflection. Indeed, any wise man would have felt not a little inclined to meditation under similar circumstances. The arcediano was to bear the brunt of the king's indignation and revenge: of this he was well

aware; for unhappily he entertained so bad an opinion of the religious sentiments of Don Pedro, that instead of receiving the censures of the church in the spirit of penitence, he felt persuaded he would grow more outrageous than ever. This violence and outrage would certainly prove advantageous to the cause, but rather perilous to the person selected to encounter its first explosion.

Under these impressions, the caballeros separated for the night, and retired to repose—to dream, perhaps, of new plans and measures for the accomplishment of their enterprize. The arcediano, it is needless to observe, had for the present nothing in view, but how to extricate himself from his dilemma without detriment to his person, which naturally enough was as dear to him as the interests of Don Enrique.

CHAPTER V.

THE FESTIVITIES.

" Come hither, come hither—by night and by day,
We linger in pleasures that never are gone ;
Like the waves of the summer, as one dies away,
Another as sweet and as shining comes on."

MOORE.

THE nuptials of the Duke of Lancaster and the Princess Beatriz were celebrated with great pomp and splendour.(7) An uninterrupted round of festivity and revels occupied the attention of the inhabitants of Seville. Every shop was shut up, and every artisan was engaged in the *taberna.** A continual din of instruments

* Public-house.

pervaded the city, and pleasure seemed to possess an undisputed sovereignty alike over the court and the people. Along the banks of the Guadalquiver was erected a city of magnificent silken pavilions of costly manufacture, ornamented with armorial devices, and surmounted by the arms of the grandee to whom it belonged. In these pavilions, refreshments and delicate fruits were hourly served by handsome pages to the numerous visitors. There rose a splendid tent, where the king and royal family gave a sumptuous entertainment: the arms of Castile, and the banner of Guienne, appeared amicably united, and attracted the attention of the gazing multitude. The secret enemies of Don Pedro smiled, and inwardly congratulated themselves that these signs of amity would not be of long continuation. Besides the pavilions of the nobility and gentry, there were innumerable booths, overflowing with food and wine, gratuitously distributed to the public, at the expense of the grandee in whose vicinity the booth stood.

During this day a superb cavalcade of elegant females attired in all the fashion of the times, and escorted by a suitable number of knights in armour, patrolled the smiling banks of the river, while the people, excited to a proper pitch of enthusiastic loyalty by liberal potations, continued to keep up the spirit of the scene by joyous shouts of approbation. The two jesters of the court, as well as every other expert buffoon, contrived to perform their best antics, as they had been commanded to enliven the entertainments. Their sallies and drollery were heightened by the most grotesque figures, and extraordinary evolutions, to say nothing of the dancers, the jumpers, and making all manner of national contortions. In this curious pageant might be also discerned devils, angels, and dragons, promiscuously jumbled with the strangest mysteries, while the frequent jest proceeding from any of these gifted personages was sure to elicit a burst of unmeaning applause.

Some of these mummers were expert in acting

the part of animals, and accordingly a tolerable number of tigers and lions, dogs, bears, and even asses, were to be seen, now in friendly intercourse, and now coming to blows. Sometimes forgetting their quadruped nature, they applied their hoofs and claws in a manner very different to their brethren of the forest. Indeed these quarrels were not of rare occurrence, for the lion's head was confused with a more than reasonable portion of wine, to which his sylvan majesty seemed little accustomed; while the ass, utterly forgetting his humble nature, grew quarrelsome, and boldly challenged the tiger to fight. The grand *danza de los animales** was several times performed, and it was curious to observe the motley and grotesque figures in their fantastic evolutions. This dance was accompanied by appropriate music, in imitation of the natural sounds of these several accomplished brutes. These buffooneries afforded much satisfaction, not only to the lower classes, but even

* The dance of the animals.

to persons of rank; for in those times refinement and polish had not made those gigantic inroads on simple amusements that we now term childish, and the high born and rich condescended to be amused like other mortals.

Some very free jokes and loose allusions were bandied about, and specimens of the most severe satire were liberally bestowed on different classes. Justice might be seen handcuffed—Religion with two different faces, under a black and a white hood; while Charity, a decrepit old lady, deaf and blind, was left to take care of herself. Several curious dialogues took place between the rational and irrational animals, which served greatly to enhance the humour of the scene. They were sometimes, indeed, productive of disastrous results; but in those times a few wounds, or a death or two, were not considered matters of sufficient importance to disturb the progress of a state festival. Don Pedro, accompanied by the Black Prince and a sumptuous retinue, paraded the spacious plain;

and there were a few more pleased observers of the various fooleries that were rehearsed.

It happened that as the king passed along he observed a tremendous lion, who had been just knocked down and most miserably belaboured by an ass; the circumstance caught his attention, and with much good nature he approached the prostrate lion.

"What!" he exclaimed, jocosely, "My brother king of the forest, art thou then brought so low?"

"Alas! my good cousin," replied his lionine majesty, "I am not the first sovereign to whom this stupid mischance hath happened, nor probably shall I be the last."

"That may be," continued the king, somewhat moved, "but methinks you ought to be vanquished by more honourable enemies."

"Trust not to appearances, Señor," interposed the ass; "under this humble, and apparently submissive form, there may be more skill and mettle than you may wot of."

" The donkey speaks sensibly," quoth Edward of Wales, smiling, " why, he ought to be a counsellor at court."

" Lord ! good prince," quoth the ass, " there are too many already. I wish not to sow the seeds of contention in a land so unusually fertile in favouring its growth."

" Heaven defend us !" cried Don Pedro, " this good ass is learned, and, methinks, smacks somewhat of the statesman. Now, *Señor Asino*, what knowest thou of the state of Castile, or that it is so very prolific in sprouting forth the seeds of sedition ?"

" Oh ! Señor Rey," replied the asinine statesman, " it is not prudent to communicate all one's knowledge to his neighbour, least of all to a powerful neighbour, when God only knows how disposed he may be to relish the information, and how docile to profit by it."

" But knowest thou, *buen bestia*,* that half

* Good beast.

confidence is a dangerous thing? What if we were to *exact* the other half."

"Exact! Jesus Maria defend us!" cried the ass. "You seem to possess no other resource. Turn, Señor, and look at that conclave of wily foxes! take example from them; they assuredly make use of no force, and yet Heaven forbid they should accomplish their designs."

Don Pedro was struck at this information. He perceived that the sallies of the mummer had reference to something of a more secret nature than the mere foolery of the moment. Resolved to penetrate further into the mystery, he commanded the mimic ass to repair to the entrance of his tent, and there to await his arrival. He then continued his ride with seeming unconcern. Prince Edward, however, observed, that in spite of his apparent composure, the words of the jester had made a deep impression upon him, and he remarked:—

"Sir King, you appear more thoughtful, methinks, than the occasion seems to justify."

" No, good cousin, I have most cogent reason to ponder and reflect; I am surrounded with plotters and conspirators, and unless I adopt some vigorous measures—unless two or three score of heads be severed from their shoulders, I shall not long enjoy security, and Castile will be again a prey to civil dissensions."

" Your remedy, Sir, no way meets my approbation. Already, in direct violation of our agreement, you have made free with the lives of several noblemen; the death of the Maestre de San Bernardo has excited general indignation. Sir Spaniard, I must speak plainly: I engaged, as a true knight, and a christian warrior, to support your right against an usurper; but I will not endure to be accounted a cloak for the private vengeance of any man, however high his station—however just his provocation. You may be assured, Don Pedro, that the steps you pursue are not calculated to conciliate the minds of your subjects. You must bear with these

remonstrances; my duty as a knight, and my affection for you as a kinsman, dictate them."

"Thank you, good Sir," said Don Pedro, mortified. "It seems that the King of Castile is doomed to forego all those rights which his ancestors from time immemorial possessed."

"Rights! good Heaven!" cried the prince: "is it then a right attached to sovereignty to exercise a cruel and revengeful disposition, without check or controul?—the idea is monstrous."

The dialogue was growing warm, when the royal kinsmen, as if by common consent, allowed their attention to be diverted by fresh gambols and merriment. Don Pedro, however, was far from being a convert to the opinion of the prince, and the latter was firmly resolved to demand an explanation of the king's summary proceedings at a more fit opportunity. Indeed, murmurs of disaffection began to be heard in the country—they were for a time stifled amidst the vacant joy of the nuptial festivities; but

were likely soon to assume a more formidable appearance, for Don Pedro was bent on giving fresh occasion of complaint. The prince could not, consistently with his character, countenance these proceedings, and he had resolved to quit Spain, should Don Pedro continue to give further proofs of his refractory and tyrannical disposition.

The king repaired to his tent, where the asinine sage awaited his arrival, according to orders. The animal was commanded to put away his assumed apparel, and present himself in his true character. The mandate was promptly obeyed, when, to the astonishment of Don Pedro, he beheld the zapatero Rufino, on whom he had passed a sentence that rescued him from death.

" Heaven defend us!—the *zapatero*, as I am King of Castile. So, my master, being forbidden to make shoes, thou forthwith thinkest to become privy-counsellor to thy sovereign. By my faith, the change is curious enough.

Well, what hast thou to communicate? some mysterious meaning was concealed in thy remarks, which it is now my wish thou shouldst more fully unfold."

"Señor," answered Rufino, in a firm tone, "I am a proscribed ass, and perhaps not all your power can save me from the destruction to which he is condemned by his unrelenting brethren of the church: but before I meet my doom, I will unravel what has come to my knowledge. A deep plot is in progress, and the most powerful engines are already set to work. Don Alvar is arrived from France, no doubt with instructions from Trastamara, and some grand blow will soon no doubt be struck; but of the time and place I have not been able to obtain any circumstantial intelligence."

"*Vive Dios!*" cried Don Pedro, "this is worth listening to. Now," he added, smiling, "I would my English kinsman were here to learn these edifying proceedings. I marvel if he would be such a strenuous advocate for

lenient measures. How wast thou made acquainted with this fresh spawn of treason?"

"By a most fortunate—a most extraordinary chance. One of the retainers of the conspirators, who possesses the unlimited confidence of his master, had been formerly a good friend of mine. He learnt with horror that my destruction was resolved upon, in revengeful spite for the blow aimed at the canons in your just decision, Señor."

"Proceed," said the king, in eager expectation.

"My friend, touched with compassion, apprised me of my danger, as well as of the conspiracy in which his master was involved, and whose service he has quitted this very morning. He would not, however, enter into any explanation concerning the progress of the plotters, for of their number and designs he himself is ignorant. But of the arrival of Don Alvar de Lara there is no doubt; I myself saw him, last night, prowling about, enveloped in a

long cloak. No, I cannot be mistaken in the man."

"Well, well, but the name of the master of your informant—we may soon come to a perfect knowledge of all."

"The name," resolutely replied Rufino, "I will never reveal."

"How!" exclaimed the king, in amazement, "pronounce it immediately, or look upon thy death."

"Señor, I shrink not from death, when earned at the expense of integrity. I am bound by oath not to divulge the name, and I will keep it inviolable—so God help me with his grace. Take the life you saved, if it be worth having; but I cannot betray my trust."

"Rebellious, misguided fool!" cried the king, in wrath, "is this thy specious loyalty to thy master? Thinkest thou there can be any honour in screening a traitor from punishment? An oath made under such circumstances is not

binding—no, by God! and it shall be broken—it shall be broken!"

"Never!" coolly and resolutely replied the *zapatero*.

The manly and dignified composure in which that single word was pronounced, somewhat disconcerted the king. He foresaw that neither promises nor threats were likely to have any influence on a mind like that of the humble artizan before him. He was furiously provoked at the fortitude of the man, but could not help admiring his resolution. Don Pedro now fell into a serious train of thought—he might vent his revenge on the zapatero, but he was persuaded he would only, by such means, lose a zealous adherent, who, both from a sense of gratitude and the situation in which he was placed, had an interest in vigilantly observing every movement of the conspirators; for once Don Pedro reined in the ebullition of his violence. He resolved to stifle his anger for a moment, and

to gain a friend, who might be of great service to his cause.

"Rufino," he now said, in a calmer tone, "I will not press you further; you certainly act under a wrong idea of integrity: but I will respect your error, in consideration of the motive; nevertheless, ponder well the misfortunes you may entail on the state, by an improper silence, and a mistaken notion of honour."

"Señor," respectfully answered the *zapatero*, "I hate and despise the traitors as much as your highness: I shall be constantly on the alert: and should I find at fault the nobleman whose name I am now compelled to keep secret, I would not scruple to plunge a dagger into his bosom. For the present, however, I know nothing certain but his clandestine meetings; and I could never persuade myself to repay my friend's service, by betraying the master to whom he is attached. Let that master be guilty of any avowed treasonable act, then my conscience—"

"Tush, man!" interrupted Don Pedro, with a sneer; "no thanks can be your due. It is the duty of every faithful subject to oppose treason. You can serve me now: sooner or later, the rebel must be detected; but an example now, might prove a salutary lesson to his comrades."

"My word is given," replied Rufino, in a composed tone; "I cannot break it."

"Have your way," returned the king, in visible vexation; "it is decreed, that every one who calls himself my friend, from the highest to the lowest—from the illustrious English prince, to an humble *zapatero*—must oppose my inclination, and thwart in every way the salutary effects of my justice."

Don Pedro had been powerfully affected by the information given by Rufino. He already suspected that some treasonable designs were in contemplation; but he never imagined the plot to be so nearly matured as to call for the arrival of Trastamara's favourite, Don Alvar.

The king dismissed Rufino with injunctions how to act; he ordered him, should he again meet Don Alvar, to follow him, and to learn where he lay concealed. The king further gave secret orders for his apprehension. In regard to the nobleman in whose security the interests of too many important personages were concerned, to render him liable to a discovery, the king resolved to act with greater circumspection.

At this moment, a confused clamour roused the attention of Don Pedro. He sallied out, under the alarm of some conspiracy; but it proved to be nothing but a numerous body of the different trades, who came bearing the insignia of their calling, and thus grotesquely attired, to mingle in the sports of the day. A most tremendous din prevailed; and the king, as soon as he beheld the quaint groups, that approached on every side, and the practical jokes of his buffoons, almost forgot the alarming nature of Rufino's communication.

Nevertheless, he soon relapsed into a sombre

mood; and in the bitterness of his soul, he exclaimed,

"A curse on them all! Who knows but amongst this cringing herd of vile sycophants, some of my most inveterate enemies lie concealed!"

He was now joined by De Castro, Don Egas, and his beautiful daughter.

The presence of Costanza operated like a talisman on the feelings of Don Pedro; his clouded brow became gradually unbent—his sternness fled—the scowl of resentment gave place to the smile of pleasure. The day wore off, like the preceding, in revelry and feasting; but it was during the hours of night that the spectacle became most striking and magnificent. All the pavilions were brilliantly illuminated, as well as the trees that surrounded them; whilst enormous torches blazed along the banks of the river, flinging a glowing reflection over its classic waters. A thousand gay boats wafted along troops of minstrels, who filled the air with

their harmony. Nothing could exceed the charm of the fairy scene. The soft, balmy air of the Andalusian clime, the rich odour of orange groves, the perfume of garlands and flowering shrubs—all united to lull the senses in sweet intoxication.

A splendid *sarao** was held in the royal tent, where all the rank and beauty of Seville assembled, vieing with each other in the richness of attire and costly ornaments. Several dances were led off, and the whole night was spent in a succession of delights.

According to the custom of the times, a grand tournament and tilting took place, in which Sir John Chandos shone conspicuous, amidst a host of gallant knights, both English and Castilian.

There was also a bull-fight, signalized by numerous daring feats of skill and valour. In short, nothing was forgotten that could tend to give variety to these sumptuous entertainments,

* An assembly.

amongst the most splendid then known in Europe.

It was on one of these nights, consecrated to revelry and pleasure, that Sir John Chandos, who had become a prodigious favourite at Seville, was attracted to a shady grove, at no great distance from the royal tent, and there, with no less indignation than surprise, he beheld a beautiful lady, apparently in distress, resisting the too free advances of a man in Moorish attire.

"Desist, Señor;" said the fair, "you cannot mean thus to insult a lady of the house of Vargas!"

"Nay, my sweet girl, you must not for ever treat me with this mortifying coldness; must the fervour of my passion then plead in vain?"

"Alas! Señor, is it possible you can forget that the man, whom every word you utter so deeply injures, is Don Ferran de Castro, your most devoted and most faithful adherent?"

The mention of this name attracted Sir John's

attention, and approaching near, he soon discovered that the female thus importuned by the handsome Moor was in reality Costanza. He was fired with indignation at the freedom thus evinced towards a lady whom he, in the spirit of chivalry, of which he was a model, was accustomed to regard almost as a divinity. The Moor had already seized the hand of Costanza, and rudely imprinted on it a thousand kisses. Sir John advanced, and in a manly and decided tone commanded him to desist; when the Moor thus unseasonably interrupted, swore a terrible oath, and haughtily bade the stranger to begone.

"No, by St. George, I move not hence," said the knight, "unless with this lady under my charge, to whom thou hast dastardly dared to offer such rank offence."

"Begone! again I say, or tremble!"

"Tremble!" exclaimed the knight, in a higher tone of voice—"I am Sir John Chandos, who

never trembled at a threat; 'tis for thee to begone, vile Moor, before I use compulsion."

"By Santiago, this baffles all endurance! Know thou, proud Sir, that however great Sir John Chandos may be, there are some whose orders are still more powerful, at least in these realms—quit this place, caballero."

"I have once uttered my determination, and I will abide the result: from this spot I stir not, unless it be at the desire of this lady."

"Begone!" cried again the Moor, in a phrenzied rage: "I charge thee, leave the spot! for I am the King Don Pedro."

"What! Thou the King Don Pedro!" exclaimed Sir John, in a scornful voice. "By God, thou liest! Now I am certain thou art an impostor. A noble Castilian King would scorn the action of which thou art guilty, no less than adopting the vile disguise which thou hast unblushingly assumed. No, Don Pedro cannot be offering violence to one of the ladies of the

court—to the betrothed of the best of Castilian knights—the high-minded, the generous Don Ferran! No, no; thou canst not impose upon me: Don Pedro cannot have fallen so low; he would at least have nobleness enough not to confess himself the King of Castile, when engaged in an act that could only reflect disgrace upon his name."

The king, for such the pretended Moor indeed was, felt the justice of the rebuke; and a sense of noble pride, and of his own dignity, suddenly superseded the more violent feelings of anger and revenge. He felt that the most prudent course to pursue, in this dilemma, was strictly to preserve the incognito; and he was aware the generosity of Costanza would not betray him. He smarted under the double sting of shame and disappointment, but the redoubtable knight that stood before him helped to stifle his indignant feelings.

Don Pedro never knew fear: he was brave and enterprising, among the bravest; but yet to

be detected by one of the most illustrious of his allies in an unworthy act, was repugnant to his haughty spirit, and he accordingly in a moment adopted his resolution.

"Thou speakest true," said he, sullenly; "the King of Castile could not act unworthily: and I depart, not compelled by thee, but by the severe justice of thy rebuke. Lady," he then added, in a lower tone, "pardon the breach of gallantry of which I confess myself guilty. I trust in your generosity for secrecy; thou wilt preserve silence with respect to the Moor."

Saying this, he suddenly withdrew.

Sir John Chandos then politely escorted the beautiful Costanza to the pavilion of her father, from which she had been summoned to attend on the princess at the royal tent. Upon their arrival at the pavilion, Sir John was astonished to behold the king in conversation with Don Egas, and advancing with much courtesy to meet his beauteous charge. He

had strongly suspected, all along, that the disguised Moor was no other than Don Pedro; but he could hardly reconcile this circumstance with the fact of finding him in that place; for he must have used the expedition of lightning in throwing off his dress. Besides, he exhibited not the smallest traces of confusion or disorder in his countenance: his demeanour was dignified, and he conducted himself towards Sir John with perfect ease and composure.

"Don Egas," said Sir John Chandos, "here I deliver to your paternal care, the lady I have rescued from an affront."

"*Vive Dios!*" exclaimed Don Egas: "Surely no one could venture upon such a proceeding!"

"Surely, Señor Ingles," observed the king, "we are much holden to you for this service; and in sooth, we shall not soon lose the recollection of it."

"No thanks are due to me," replied Sir John, "for having done my duty; but I marvel, Don Pedro, that vile, unbelieving Moors should

venture to proceed to such criminal lengths in the very centre of Seville; nay, so near the royal tent: these things ought closely to be looked to."

"They ought, and in sooth, they shall," returned Don Pedro, with the most consummate coolness; "but how can we help some indiscretions and disorders at this time, when the whole city, nobles and plebeians, are wildly abandoning themselves to pleasure in all the flow of exhilarated spirits?—Some of those mummers, no doubt, have been guilty of this trick, to frighten our fair and well-beloved Costanza; but I pledge my royal word, such deeds shall hardly be tried a second time."

After this little incident, which served to illustrate some points in the characters of Sir John Chandos and Don Pedro, nothing particular occurred during the succeeding day. The merry sport, the enlivening music, the feasting and the fooleries, continued in the same uninterrupted course, until they began to grow monotonous.

On the last day of the sports, however, an occurrence took place, which well deserves commemoration.

The king, attended by a most brilliant cavalcade, was parading in his usual pomp among those scenes of gaiety, when suddenly the procession was disturbed by the approach of one of the revellers, who with many gesticulations desired to be allowed to address the king. Don Pedro naturally imagined this to be some new device, and he accordingly ordered the man to approach. "Ah! *burlon*,* what wouldst thou with Don Pedro?" he demanded.

"*Señor Guardeos el cielo, y la Virgen Santa!*"

"Well, well, proceed to thy business."

"If your highness would but ride towards the banks of the river, you would find a scene quite unexpected, and that will surely strike you, Señor, with much amazement."

"What is it, then?" inquired the king.

"Nay, I must not tell all, otherwise the

* Wag.

effect of the surprise would be lost; advance *poderoso*, Señor, to the banks, and observe well a galley, most gaudily bedizened; it is from that quarter that the entertainment is to proceed."

Saying this, the man bowed low, and disappeared. The king, turning to his attendants, with a smile, observed,

"Señores, we may as well witness this sight, that is to awaken our wonder: to the river, then!"

The cavalcade now proceeded at a smart trot towards the place pointed out, and scarcely had they arrived, when they really perceived a galley, slight and elegant, swiftly cutting the limpid water, over which it seemed to fly.

The galley was bedizened with innumerable streamers; but what exceedingly attracted the attention of the king, was a banner, on which were seen a mitre and two cross keys, the arms of his holiness the Pope. He approached to the very brink of the Guadalquiver, the better to

observe this phenomenon, when to his great surprise, he perceived a priest, in his sacerdotal robes, accompanied by two assistant accolites, sitting in the poop of the galley. Don Pedro knew not what to surmise from these appearances; for should it be a trick, it would hardly meet his approbation. He therefore waited with patience the solution of the mystery. The galley now stood close to the banks of the river. Don Pedro and his retinue remained in breathless expectation, when suddenly the priest arose and came forward, with an open book and a long roll in his hand.

"Heaven defend us," cried Ferran, "but the priest looks exceedingly like that arcediano, whose presence at Castile has already given rise to certain seditious rumours."

"Yes, it is the same," replied the king, with a sardonic smile; "but let us see what pretty contrivance has the holy man devised for our entertainment."

Scarcely had Don Pedro finished his observation, before the arcediano knelt a short time, and appeared engaged in fervent prayer; he then stood up, and making the sign of the cross, in a loud sonorous tone, began :—

" Don Pedro, and all ye Castilians, hear with reverence the just decree of Providence! In the name of God, and delegated by his holiness Pope Urban the Vth., I here excommunicate Don Pedro of Castile, son of Don Alonzo, for his repeated crimes and excesses against God and man, and particularly for the murder of the Maestre de San Bernardo, and many other worthy ecclesiastics. Moreover, his holiness absolves the subjects of the said Don Pedro from their oath of allegiance, and gives away this kingdom, which he disgraces, to his good and virtuous brother, Don Enrique, commonly styled Count of Trastamara: but now, in good right, lawful sovereign of Castile!"

Scarcely had the arcediano finished his daring

apostrophe, than Don Pedro, boiling with rage, plunged with his horse into the river, and with his sword, aimed a desperate blow, which just grazed the edge of the galley, but did not reach the object of his wrath. So sudden was the attack, that the rowers had hardly time to exert themselves; but the galley at length sped away with astonishing expedition. It was light, and, besides, well supplied with oars, which were used with much alacrity on this occasion.

Indeed the arcediano, who knew the character of the king, was in visible terror and consternation. He besought the mariners to exert their utmost endeavours, and he would amply compensate them for their services. The horse of Don Pedro, excited by his rider, made violent exertions to reach the galley, whilst Don Pedro himself exclaimed with a loud voice—

"Thou accursed arcediano, why fly thus? where is thy zeal and courage for the cause of

God? Stay, traitor and hypocrite, and meet Don Pedro—he armed with his sword, thou with thy bull of excommunication."

Spite of all his exertions, Don Pedro could not reach the galley: and his vexation and disappointment increased as he perceived he had no chance of wreaking his vengeance on the arcediano, who being now out of the reach of danger, further exasperated the king by his pious gesticulations.

But a new subject of alarm diverted the attention of the king and the numerous retinue that covered the banks of the river. Don Pedro's horse, worn out with exhaustion, began to droop, and gradually to recede from the shore. Alarmed at the king's imminent danger, Ferran and some other noblemen instantly plied a boat, in time to extricate him from his perilous situation; the horse, however, was carried away by the force of the current. But the king could not withdraw his flaming

eyes from the flying galley, which now appeared like a speck on the surface of the water.

" The villain !" he exclaimed, convulsed with rage, " I never met with such bold treason. Oh ! that he may ever fall into my hands !—he would soon follow the Maestre De San Bernardo ; and as for the Pope, he had better attend to his own affairs, than to be giving away kingdoms over which he has no controul. Aye ! let Trastamara," he added, with a sneer, " come and claim my kingdom, in virtue of the Pope's generous donation ! I promise he shall be received with a hearty welcome !"

The affair of the arcediano gave rise to many doubts and suspicions amongst the multitude, who had witnessed this extraordinary scene. The enemies of Don Pedro secretly congratulated themselves on the near accomplishment of their wishes, whilst the adherents of the king beheld with sorrow the event which was a sure token of the secret power and advanced machinations of the conspirators. The day wore off

tediously, and the festivities closed in as dull and monotonous a manner as their commencement had been signalized by a joyous spirit of popular pleasure and satisfaction.

CHAPTER VI.

INGRATITUDE.

" Que faut-il que je pense?
Ne ferez-vous pas taire un bruit qui vous offense?
——Seigneur, je ne rends point compte de mes desseins."

RACINE.

" A que cum plas Señor vengo
La promesa que me diste
Pues que como rey la hiciste."

ANON.

THE bridal festivities being over, Don Ferran boldly accosted the king, and claimed the fulfilment of his promise. Don Pedro received him with a sullen scowl, that seemed to obliterate the last lingering traces of regard for the noble

cavalier. Indeed the king felt his presence a continual reproach and restraint—he could no longer attempt to disguise it: and this coldness of reception augured nothing favourable to the Castilian's suit. Strong, however, in the justice of his claim, and no way intimidated, he at once observed:—

"Señor, I come to receive at your royal hands the long promised boon."

Don Pedro would not allow him to proceed; he darted an impatient look—stamped fiercely—and exclaimed, in a sharp tone,

"By Heaven! I shall never know a moment's tranquillity. Am I not harrassed with plots and disaffection? menaced every day with a renewal of a sanguinary contest to defend my rights? and yet my subjects scruple not to annoy me with a repetition of their loves."

"Don Pedro," replied the Castilian, respectfully, "I cannot perceive how my nuptials with Costanza can any way interfere with the affairs of the state. Señor, I make no request—I ask

for nothing but what your royal word made promise of."

"Don Ferran," returned the king, "a sovereign is not to be judged by common rules; as circumstances vary, his disposition may also undergo a change."

"My liege, what am I to understand from this strange observation?" inquired Ferran, in visible agitation.

"My meaning is plain," sullenly replied Don Pedro.

"What! then my request meets with a blank refusal?"

"Yes!" cried the king, with a burst of passion, and turned away in uncontrollable displeasure.

The Castilian stood, for a moment, as if rooted to the ground; his arms folded, his eyes casting glances of mingled rage and contempt. A sudden resolution seemed to be working within him—he said not a word, nor did he by signs evince any further displeasure at this ungrateful

conduct of the king. Turning quickly round, he made an humble obeisance, and immediately withdrew.

The stern coolness of this deportment somewhat alarmed Don Pedro; he began to apprehend his temper might have carried him too far, and that Ferran de Castro, in the bitterness of his soul, would now embrace any desperate means of carrying his point, and opposing the will of his sovereign. Don Pedro felt strongly agitated; a thousand conflicting passions stormed his breast; he relapsed into a sombre mood, and his most faithful partizans trembled to approach him. In this distressing position his galled temper became doubly bitter, and the fire that consumed his heart blazed with additional fury. Imprisonment and confiscations were renewed; every offence, however trifling, was certain to meet with the most rigorous retribution; discontent ran through all ranks of society, murmurs and complaints were heard on every side. The plotters against the king tri-

umphed; his friends shuddered at the storm which was gathering, and which would doubtless burst, with overwhelming violence, on the first opportunity. The Prince of Wales, indignant at the arbitrary measures of the king, and alarmed by the numerous complaints which daily came to his ears, determined to adopt stronger measures than he had hitherto done. He shrunk from the idea of being accused as the abettor of a tyrant; for his name, and those of his knights, had not been spared in the testimony of public disaffection which prevailed at Seville.

Besides, he had several other grounds of complaint against the king, for Don Pedro continued deaf to his remonstrances on the subject of the agreement made previous to embarking on his expedition into Spain. The brilliant promises made in adversity were entirely forgotten when once seated on the throne; the most subtle evasions were given to the justest of claims; and,

under some specious pretext, Don Pedro always contrived to delay the fulfilment of his treaty.

This conduct gave rise to the most unequivocal signs of indignation, on the part of the English knights; their complaints and expostulations urged the prince to adopt some decisive resolution. His stay in Spain seemed necessary under existing circumstances, and he therefore determined to threaten the king to withdraw his assistance, unless all the conditions of the treaty, in virtue of which it had been afforded, were promptly put in force. He went to the Alcazar, accompanied by Sir John Chandos, Sir Robert Knowles, and a few other principal personages, and, in a resolute tone, addressed Don Pedro.

"Sir King,—The Prince of Wales, and his good companions, will no longer consent to be tame spectators of the deeds of violence and imprudent revenge daily committed at Seville. You have broken all the conditions of our agreement. Blood has again inundated this city—the deaths

of Don Martin Yañez, the Maestre de San Bernardo (8), and, above all, the inhuman burning of Doña Urraca, have awakened feelings of most unqualified abhorrence in the mind of every upright and noble man."

"My prince," interrupted Don Pedro, with a bitter look; "do you then come to preach penitence to the King of Castile? By the rood! resign that office to the good prelates, who have the welfare of my soul so much at heart, and who piously venture to excommunicate me for my good!"

"Sir King," replied Edward, "I come not as your counsellor, for methinks that were but an unthankful office; I come for an answer to the just complaints of my followers, and to remonstrate upon treaties broken, and promises unfulfilled."

"Proceed, fair cousin," said the king, bitterly smiling; "no one will prevent you; however, if I am to understand that you come to threaten me, I find it my duty to spare you the trouble;

that were but loss of time with Don Pedro of Castile!"

"By Saint George!" cried Sir John Chandos, "Don Pedro speaks to the point; we have, indeed, been losing too much time near his person, but we can only patiently abide by this as an addition to our other losses."

"You seem facetious this morning, Señor de Chandos," said the king; "I love to see my friends in good humour."

"Your majesty takes the most extraordinary means of indulging them in this respect," returned Sir John.

"Don Pedro," interposed the Black Prince, gravely, "the purport of this visit I shall convey in few words. You are to expect no further assistance from us, and as soon as the necessary arrangements are made, we shall hasten to quit Spain."

"As you please," said Don Pedro, calmly: "I will not in the least attempt to oppose your inclination. I might expect a more friendly in-

timation, indeed, from a kinsman, at a moment when the tranquillity of my kingdom is menaced; but I scorn to stoop to supplications."

"It was not always thus!" sarcastically observed the prince.

"But never from my throne," replied Don Pedro, quickly and composedly; "I was then a wretched wanderer, not the acknowledged sovereign of Castile, and by God and Santiago, I will not now demean the dignity of my crown and country, by the least sign of weakness. Heavens! am I then to be bearded in my very alcazar, by those who, having once assisted me, seem to believe themselves no longer bound by the respect due to a king, in his own court and dominions?"

"Don Pedro!" cried Edward of Wales, in a warm tone of voice; "I was not certainly prepared for this extraordinary answer to the just complaints of your allies. It is rather a strange misapprehension, that the circumstance of your being on a throne, should disengage you from

the most sacred obligations. But, oh! ungrateful king, who placed you on that throne but the very men you scruple not now to offend with this opprobrious language? My good companions," he then added, addressing his retinue, "we will no longer offend by our presence the glorious King of Castile; let us be gone." And without saluting the king, he made a bow and retired.

Don Pedro beheld this scene with feelings of satisfaction rather than disappointment. He had been wearied with the importunities of the generous prince to adopt a different line of conduct, and his presence, as we have already mentioned, was a constant reflection on his violent proceedings. It was soon rumoured through the city that the English had resolved to quit Spain, and this intelligence was received by the majority of the people with expressions of joy. All this conveyed the most evident proofs of the inimical spirit entertained against the king: a degree of overbearing insolence was depicted in

the deportment of the factious grandees; and every thing manifested the sanguine hopes cherished by the party of Trastamara, of seeing this personage again striking for the crown of Castile.

Meantime, Don Ferran de Castro, utterly disgusted with the ungrateful behaviour of the king, had quickly repaired to his beloved Costanza, and explained the failure of his suit. She heard the tidings without evincing either surprise or vexation—on the contrary, she endeavoured to dispel the gloomy cloud which hung on her lover's brow, by the most soothing and endearing expressions—"Oh, Ferran!" she said, with much tenderness—"let not this bad king's ingratitude affect your tranquillity! I have been reflecting upon the means of averting for the future the odious addresses of Don Pedro. The moment is arrived to execute a resolution which has long occupied my thoughts. Should it meet your approbation, I shall not delay one moment in following the dictates of

my judgment, and redeeming my pledge of affection for you."

"Speak on, dear Costanza; harassed as my mind is, I could listen to such sweet counsel for ever—"

"To-morrow I shall depart for our old mansion at Valpardo—it is a sequestered spot, and there, under the protection of my aunt, I shall remain free from the importunities of the king. I would not acquaint my father with my determination until his present ambitious hopes have subsided, or he would certainly attempt to frustrate my intention. Under present circumstances, this plan is the only one which can afford us a chance of escaping the evils that surround us, or ensuring our future happiness."

The features of the Castilian brightened with joy on hearing these words. He readily acquiesced in the propriety of Costanza's views, and tenderly embracing her, he said—

"My dearest girl, no words can do justice to

the generous feelings which prompt you, but I feel some apprehensions, whether we shall so easily succeed as you seem to think. If your father is not to be apprised, from motives of prudence, of our intention, and I am to remain here at court, who is to conduct you to your intended retreat?—where shall I find an escort worthy of being entrusted with so precious a charge?"

"My conductor is already found," replied Costanza, smiling—"he is humble, but of well proved integrity, and zealously devoted to your interests."

"His name?"

"Pimiento, your honest squire! Yes, he is perfectly acquainted with the most safe and secluded roads leading to the spot. He has, on more than one occasion, been my guide—and he will feel as proud of the confidence reposed in him, as I am satisfied of the religious zeal with which he will fulfil his commission. You have

now only to select a small but valiant party, as an escort; and, in a few days, with the help of God, I shall be in safety."

De Castro, in a transport of joy, promised to abide implicitly by her least wishes. It was then determined that the necessary preparations should be made for the following night. At an advanced hour, Don Ferran himself would conduct his betrothed to the Puerta de Triana, where the party would be in readiness to depart.

Costanza retired to make arrangements; and Ferran proceeded to give Pimiento the necessary instructions. The old Escudero was not long in making his appearance, ready for departure; but his master was not a little struck, when he observed symptoms of the greatest alarm and sorrow in the good man's countenance. With agitated steps and terrified looks, as if he had some dismal intelligence to communicate, he ran into the room;—

"Pimiento, what means this emotion?"

"*Dios nos defienda, Señor!*" quoth the squire —we are on the brink of the most frightful precipice! Such a misfortune!"

"Explain, good friend, you make me tremble."

"The good English prince is seriously ill—nay, I am certain he has but a short time to live!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Ferran, in consternation, "you must be mistaken, Pimiento—had so terrible an occurrence taken place, I should have been immediately made acquainted with it, by my friend Sir John Chandos."

"Ah, Señor!" mournfully replied the Escudero—"I speak nought but the truth: would to God I were mistaken; but, unfortunately, it is too true: and what aggravates the calamity, is the strong suspicion, nay, the certainty I have, that some diabolical process has been employed, to cut short the life of this gallant prince."

"What would'st thou insinuate?" inquired De Castro, with a look of horror.

"Don Ferran!" returned Pimiento, with a suspicious look, and an under tone of voice, at the same time raising his hands to Heaven—"my dear master, it is but too probable, that some nefarious charm has been administered to the suffering knight."

"Tush! Pimiento, this is foolery, you must not give way to such a superstitious notion."

"Nay, Señor," quoth the squire despondingly shaking his head, "why should you be so stubborn in disbelieving things which have been so often incontestably proved? Recollect, Sir, how the noble Marquis of Mantua was bewitched!"

"Well, well," returned the cavalier, "but those times are passed, and we are now, God bless us, free from such diablerie."

"*Jesus Maria!*" cried Pimiento, crossing himself, "we are not so free from these malignant spirits as you imagine; you know, as well as I, that the *barrio de Triana*, is full of

them. I can never prevail upon myself to pass certain sequestered streets, without a feeling of horror: nay, when I am compelled to do so, I take care to collect all my thoughts, and till I am safe through the contaminated place, my mind is absorbed in fervent and continual prayer."

"That I approve," returned Ferran gravely, "for prayer at all events is a very good and pious exercise, though I question its influence over beings that, in my opinion, never existed, except in the fevered imaginations of credulous men."

"*Dios os perdone, Señor!*"—fervently ejaculated the old man. "Is it possible you should disbelieve what the most learned doctors and schoolmen all admit?—nay, so many canons and sacerdotes, deeply read in theology, surely cannot be mistaken! Ah! Señor, recollect that men and women have been burnt in all times and countries for the crime of witchcraft—you cannot deny this."

" Not that they suffered ; but it was from the ignorance of their judges, not for the crimes laid to their charge. But let us waive the subject, and inform me more particularly of the illness of the prince, which is of greater consequence to us."

" The illness of Don Eduardo," replied Pimiento, " is owing, according to vulgar opinion, to a magical charm, administered to him during the festivities ; whether it was in his drink or meat, or in what other way, is not known ; but this I will swear *en el nombre de Dios*,* that I clearly saw that detestable and powerful witch, Celestina, crossing the prince in his path three several times, and casting on him most sinister and ill boding looks ;—yes, I saw her with her skinny arms outstretched, and white locks loosely hanging over her shoulders, grinning frightfully, and evincing all the malignant joy of the fiend that agitated her. Oh ! Lord, I shudder even now at the odious picture—and alack ! do you

* In the name of God.

know, Señor, that even in my dreams I have been disturbed by the appalling vision!"

"Now, Pimiento," said Don Ferran calmly, I verily believe the indisposition of the prince is far from dangerous; your ridiculous fears and fancies have magnified the truth. The prince has been already for some time in a weak state of health, which he chiefly attributes to the influence of this sultry climate, but certainly not to the magical powers of the old hag Celestina, and her companions of Triana. I shall, however, immediately proceed to visit the noble prince, and learn the true cause of his illness. I must first, however, acquaint you with a measure of high importance, in which your services are requisite."

"Speak, Don Ferran," said the escudero, joyfully; "you know full well it is my greatest happiness to be any way serviceable to the best of Castilian Cavaliers—what am I to do?"

"Just to rid thyself of ridiculous fears," replied the Castilian in a friendly banter; "for

thou shalt be graced with a commission of which a gallant knight himself would be proud."

Pimiento's old eyes glistened, and he erected his head in conscious pride at these words; the idea of being engaged in offices of chivalry was to him the superlative happiness of life, and he would willingly encounter any odds against death itself in such commissions—nay, even withstand the diabolical sorcery of Celestina; for he well knew that good knights and aspirants to that honour were bound not to flinch from the superhuman powers of witches and magicians.

"Thou shalt be entrusted," resumed De Castro, "with the conducting of a noble lady to her country seat: be ready therefore against tomorrow night, for Doña Costanza will then quit Seville in thy company."

"*Señor, Jesus me valga!*—what mean you?—and Don Egas?"—

"Is to remain in ignorance of this transaction until our own time. Nay, good Pimiento, wherefore dost thou make those unseemly grimaces?

Thinkest thou Ferran De Castro would attempt aught that might blemish his honour?—Out upon thee, man—you should know me better!"

"But, Señor, pardon my scruples, if—"

"Away with thy scruples; they are out of place. The safety, the honour of Costanza and thy master call for the adoption of such a step. It is the lady Costanza herself who has most kindly and prudently proposed it; so, in God's name, it behoves thee to be prepared and follow thy master's mandates, in good faith and loyalty of heart."

"Basta, Señor," interposed Pimiento, "'tis yours to command and mine to obey. Moreover I see nought in prejudice of my conscience. If it be Doña Costanza's good will and pleasure, and her honour and happiness, as well as your own, are concerned, any opposition in your humble and faithful servant would, in troth, savour of treason and rebellion."

"Rightly spoken, honest Pimiento," said his

master, " I need not acquaint thee that this proceeding must be kept in strictest secrecy."

" Señor, I shall be as dumb as the grave."

" I trust thee well, my good friend; and now to the prince."

Saying this, Ferran hastened to the mansion of the illustrious Englishman, leaving the escudero in a singularly perplexed and delighted state of mind. He was much raised in his own estimation; for to be entrusted with a commission, in which the honour and happiness of so deserving a cavalier and lovely a lady were interested, struck him as being the *ne plus ultra* of confidence, that could be conferred on any esquire by his knight. The little feeling of doubt which first crossed his mind was quickly banished by his master's assurance.

Meantime, Ferran had been ushered into the apartment of the suffering prince. He beheld him prostrate on his couch, surrounded by his faithful knights, whose countenances bore

witness to their deep affliction. Edward appeared very much enfeebled, and an air of dejection shadowed the expression of those generous features, so full of nobleness and candour. It was a scene of mournful interest to behold the formidable warrior, whose superior strength and bravery seemed to have set him above the controul of fortune, now weaker than beings of more humble clay—it was humiliating to towering knighthood to see its most gigantic prop and pillar, its most brilliant ornament, subject to the same common law of mortality. A respectful silence reigned throughout the chamber, and Ferran for some time stood at a distance, unwilling to disturb the sacredness of sorrow. Edward, however, perceived, and waved his hand for him to approach: the Castilian obeyed in silence.

"Sir Ferran," he said, with enfeebled but steady voice, "you see Edward of Wales far different from him who appeared in the field of Najara. The Lord's will be done! I must not

expect to enjoy the fame and splendour of this world without a share of its distress."

"Be of good cheer, my prince," said the Castilian, "for this passing cloud will soon be gone, like the shadow of a summer's night, darkening for but few hours the brilliancy of the sun. But, Sir John," he added, turning to that knight, "know you not the origin of this malady?"

"Sir Castilian, and my good friend," replied Sir John, with a scornful smile; "when leaches cannot concur in their opinion, we unlearned knights vainly attempt to decide on what is foreign to our calling. We know not how to reconcile the variety of opinions given by the three doctors, who have successively paid their devoirs to our noble prince. Our English leach would have us suppose that some baneful draught has been administered by a secret enemy; the Castilian sage boldly affirms there's a spice of witchcraft and sorcery in the case; and, lastly, the Jewish dispensator confidently asserts that

our good master suffers from a fever produced by the sultry influence of the climate, added to some other adventitious cause."

"And by St. George!" replied Edward, "the Jew is the most reasonable man of the three, and I will in preference follow his prescriptions."

"For my part," observed Sir Robert Knowlles, with a suspicious tone, "I would not entirely discard the judgment of our English leach. Remember, my prince, that the treacherous expedient of accursed poison has been more than once employed against those enemies whom it would have been dangerous to meet boldly with lance or battle-axe in open strife."

"Thy regard for me, I esteem," replied the prince; "but, Sir knight, thy suspicions are unfounded and ungenerous: what enemies are those that wish me so ill?"

"God save the mark!" exclaimed Sir Robert, "what enemies, my good liege! Why the adherents of Trastamara and Don Pedro: the

first to get rid of an incumbrance that obstructs their rebellious plans; the latter, from the spite and malignant feeling suggested by the king."

"Enough, Sir Robert, enough," cried Don Ferran, warmly; "you seem to forget the courtesy of a true caballero, when, in the presence of a true Castilian noble, you dare boldly utter accusations, so unfounded and degrading, against my king and his faithful adherents. Don Ferran de Castro is one of these, and as such, he must testify his undisguised surprise and just indignation at hearing this foul slander from the mouth of an ally."

"Sir Spaniard!" replied Sir Robert, in an elevated tone; "I acknowledge no vassalage to the king of Castile; nor am I conscious that any cavalier has a right to question my free opinions; therefore, if any knight should——"

"Eh! Sir! what means this?" cried Edward, who perceived this altercation growing serious; "does the spectacle of your prince, stretched on the couch of sickness, merit no other

mark of respect from his friends? Sir Robert, I charge thee to hold thy peace. I am satisfied of the cause of my malady, and if I refuse to question the fair proceeding of those by whom I am surrounded, whether enemy or ally, it behoves you, Sir knight, to withhold your opinion in my presence. Moreover, your freedom of language carried not only an ill grace, but open and direct breach of amity, when delivered in the hearing of the true and loyal Castilian knight, Don Ferran de Castro, whom, Sirs, I honour and esteem as one of the most deserving amongst the best in Christendom."

The timely interposition of the prince fortunately checked the progress of this disagreeable debate. The knights shook hands; but Sir Robert could not completely divest himself of suspicion, and, after the departure of the Castilian, he ventured again to express his thoughts, notwithstanding his master's injunction.

Indeed, the most singular rumours were circulated about Seville, respecting the illness of

the English prince. These, however, were too strange and contradictory to be worthy of any credit. Some confidently maintained that he had been poisoned, but that the deleterious drug had not been sufficiently strong to produce the desired effect. This opinion was entertained by two very different classes; for whilst some attributed the nefarious act to the partizans of Trastamara, who wished, at any risk, to get rid of their formidable enemy, others as vigourously maintained that this crime originated, like many others, in the violent and revengeful temper of the king himself, who had ventured upon this expedient to free himself from a troublesome creditor and monitor, whom he could ill brook. The adherents of Don Pedro and Don Enrique uttered recriminations against each other, whilst a considerable portion of the people, in whose view of the affair our good Pimiento wholly coincided, most confidently laid the charge to the disastrous influence of some magical charm. The more rational considered the illness to arise from

the effects of the climate, an opinion which the brave prince himself implicitly believed.

The Castilian returned to his dwelling in an unusual state of excitement. The bold step he was about to take, with regard to Costanza, and which would naturally expose him to the resentment of the king, added to the increasing irritability of his temper, the approaching departure of the allies, and the many just grounds they had of complaint, all tended to awaken in his mind a train of harassing thoughts. He was, however, obliged to stifle his conflicting feelings, and wear a more composed demeanor, for he had yet to make arrangements for the flight of his beloved Costanza.

CHAPTER VII.

TRIALS.

Revenge is but a frailty, incident
To crazed and sickly minds—the poor content
Of little souls—unable to surmount
An injury—too weak to bear affront.

OLDHAM.

Go, go—'tis vain to curse,
'Tis weakness to upbraid thee;
Hate cannot wish thee worse,
Than guilt and shame have made thee.

T. MOORE.

THE night was far advanced, and solemn stillness reigned throughout Seville, as Ferran de Castro, conducting his beautiful and beloved companion, reached the gate of Triana, where

the party, with Pimiento, was already impatiently expecting them. Ferran's brow was clouded, and the tinge of melancholy so peculiar to his features, seemed to have acquired an additional shade, as the moment of separation arrived. Not so, Costanza—she exhibited a buoyancy of spirits that might be considered misplaced on such an occasion. However, the certainty of escaping from the afflicting importunities of a despotic king, and the cheering prospect of a speedy re-union with the object of her affections, in some measure justified sensations which seemed so much at variance with those evinced by her lover. But Ferran cared not to acquaint her with the reflections which filled his own breast; he remained at Seville to withstand the brunt of Don Pedro's indignation, and a parent's just reproaches. The course adopted with regard to Don Egas was not in strict accordance with the rectitude of principle and scrupulous delicacy of the Castilian's character. He had joyfully embraced Costanza's proposition as

the best expedient in case of emergency; but when he reflected on the subject, and weighed the inconveniences with which it was surrounded, a train of distressing ideas succeeded.

Such is the mind of man; but different, widely different, is that of loving woman. Long she reflects before her more timorous nature resolves to take a bold and decided step; but the resolution once made, she blindly and fearlessly plunges into the stream, nor suffers herself to cast a look behind: she thinks not of consequences. It is in such extreme cases that woman generally shews more resolution than her strong and reflecting companion—this may explain the contradictory frame of mind in which Ferran and Costanza appeared, at the moment of taking leave of each other. The cavalcade was now ready to depart: Pimiento stood, at some distance from the escort, with the palfrey of his mistress, whilst the lover, taking a last embrace, renewed his ardent vows of constancy and love. He then enjoined Pimiento to be cautious and

watchful, no less than old Dame Petrona, who acted as duenna, and slowly retraced his steps towards Seville. A deep cloud hung upon his mind, he felt strongly agitated, and a cold clammy moisture chilled his forehead. Was this the herald of some impending misfortune? He had never felt thus: he had faced danger in her most frightful forms; he had drank deeply of the cup of bitterness, and been schooled in suffering and privation; yet his manly and unshrinking soul had never before experienced this strange oppression, that, despite of his resolution, now took possession of his heart. He had often been separated from the object of his adoration, under circumstances of the most galling nature; but he did not then feel the same unhappy presentiments, and unaccountable dejection, that now weighed him down. He felt ashamed of a weakness so incompatible with his character; but the phantom of impending evil that pursued him, could not be chased away. Don Ferran was not superstitious: indeed his mind was wholly

free from it; he dreaded not the agency of witches and supernatural beings, which in those times so powerfully swayed the imagination, even of the more enlightened classes in Spain.

In this sombre mood, Ferran was entering a long and narrow street, upon his return—the most complete darkness reigned throughout, with a deadly silence, that served to increase his feelings of superstitious gloom. There was only one small flickering light; it proceeded from a low window. Ferran, however, without noticing the object, advanced on his way; the hollow tramp of his horse resounded on the pavement. The light moved—it receded—and presently the grated window creaked upon its rusty hinges. Ferran, as he passed by, observed in the interior of the chamber, with a thrill of horror, a figure that might well awaken apprehension in the stoutest breast. Through the iron bars a long skinny arm was protruded, which held the dismal lamp, and by its light appeared a ghastly countenance, whose wild eyes seemed fixed in

the agony of death. The lips were livid, and the decayed jaws bore the unearthly resemblance of the tenant of a tomb. Her long shaggy hair hung in wild confusion, and a filthy red cloth partly covered the old hag's head; she presented a picture of terror and disgust, amidst the darkness and gloom that reigned around.

She was the celebrated sorceress—the fearful Celestina, whose predictions were held in much dread, and who had acquired such ascendancy over the credulous fears of the Sevilians, that even the magistrates felt loath to intermeddle with her accursed and forbidden avocations. At another time, and under different circumstances, this apparition would have excited no other feeling in the mind of Ferran, than contemptuous indignation. He had, on more than one occasion, ridiculed the pretended divinations of the hag, or censured the forbearance of the civil authority in suffering her impositions; but now, at the sudden and unexpected sight, the manly and courageous Ferran remained, as if spell-

bound, for a moment, whilst an involuntary ejaculation escaped his lips. He looked again, as he passed under the odious window—the hag was there—she fixed her eye upon him with a horrid grin, that rendered still more frightful her toothless mouth, and the withering glance of her eye.

"Stop, I say! hear me, Don Ferran," cried Celestina, "and mark me well—be wary and provident in time—else will you mourn when the remedy is gone by."

"Avaunt! detested woman," replied the cavalier, indignantly, who had now recovered from his momentary surprise; "thy enigmatical foolery I despise; and would to God thy abominable imposition might meet with its merited guerdon!" A hideous laugh was the answer to the Castilian's charitable wish.

"Loco! loco!"* cried Celestina, in a chaunting and emphatic tone; "woe is thee! for a

* Thou madman.

stubborn, deluded partizan of a tyrant!" She said, and suddenly disappeared.

"By my troth," observed the cavalier, as he hastened away, "no good purpose can have brought the hag hither, and at this time—she may be as useful a tool in the hands of scheming plotters as any other— who knows what is now in the wind?"

He had scarcely turned the obnoxious street, when he was softly called by his name; he halted, and perceived a man, enveloped in a cloak, making up to him.

"What would'st thou with me at this unseasonable hour?" sternly inquired the Castilian, as he placed himself in an attitude of defence.

"Nay," replied the stranger, "fear nothing; I come as a friend, and God prosper my good errand."

"Caballero," gravely returned Don Ferran, "whatever your intention may be, this is neither the time nor place for such communications.

My mansion is well known at Seville, and there only can I listen to the mission of strangers."

"Though now in disguise," observed the mysterious cavalier, "I am no stranger to Don Ferran. In the tournay, and in the *sarao*,* we have more than once been companions; nor is my family less powerful and noble than his."

"Sir," replied the young cavalier; "your titles to my consideration may be great as you say, but I must be held excused, if I pay not due respect to them, when proffered to me under disguise; and now, caballero, begone in peace, and let me proceed on my way."

"Stay, Don Ferran, stay," cried the stranger, much agitated; "I must fulfil my commission —since you will not hearken to the disclosures intended to ensure your future safety, take this letter—it will explain my meaning. Should you be inclined to act the part of a noble Castilian, we shall meet again;—if not—farewell!"

* An Assembly.

Saying this, he sped away, leaving the letter in the hands of De Castro. The cavalier hastened to his mansion, not a little perplexed. The moment he arrived, he broke the seal, and perused the letter, the tenor of which ran thus :—

" Don Ferran,

" Awake from your lethargic delusions: your noble nature was not designed to uphold the power of a tyrant—the scourge of Castile—one who repays your misguided services with the basest ingratitude. Think on Costanza de Vargas; even of that treasure the despot will soon despoil thee. He abhors thee. Whither his vengeance will lead, may easily be surmised. And what! shall the noble Don Ferran de Castro quietly stoop to these indignities —will he madly cling to one who spurns him? No, let him rather join his brother nobles, who are resolved to assert their injured rights against oppression. Reflect, Don Ferran, and decide—the ruin of the tyrant is decreed. Why

should you fall with him? Should you resolve to join us, remember to pass twice, at midnight, through the same street—but alone. Do not attempt to play false—we are prepared against any surprise.

"A CASTILIAN NOBLE, AND YOUR FRIEND."

Don Ferran was astonished at the contents of this letter, no less than the mysterious manner in which it had been conveyed to his hands. It was evident that the hag Celestina was purposely seen at that place;—some diabolical plot was in progress, and Ferran shuddered at the power which the rebels seemed to possess. Their machinations were no longer a secret, the castles of Peñafiel, and the Alcazar of Segovia had already declared themselves independent of Don Pedro, and the tidings from France were every day of a more alarming nature. The approaching departure of the Black Prince and his gallant companions was also the harbinger of misfortune, and the Castilian felt alarmed at

the prospect of beholding the country about to be plunged again into a disastrous and sanguinary contest.

With this distressing thought he retired to repose, in a state of feverish excitement. His slumbers were harassed with a thousand perplexing dreams and agitating passions. The following day was one of strange anxiety to Don Egas de Vargas. When he first perceived the absence of his daughter, he felt hardly any alarm, for he immediately concluded that she had been detained by the princess at the alcazar. To this place then the old cavalier hurried, in the hope of finding her. He obtained, as usual, a ready access to the king, and when he had paid his devoirs, the anxious parent, endeavouring to disguise his feelings, began to unfold the purport of his early visit:

"Señor Don Pedro," he began, "I am aware there may be some indiscretion in thus intruding upon your majesty, but you must forgive the anxiety of a father's heart."

"My good friend," replied Don Pedro, sur-

prised—" I cannot pardon you, forsooth, until I know the nature of your indiscretion. Upon my faith, you seem in a very strange mood; has any mischance occurred?"

" Mischance?—Heaven!—I dare not ask! my mind misgives me strangely!"

Don Pedro looked on him with surprise. He knew not what to think from the old cavalier's words and actions. " By Santiago, what means this?—are you mad, Sir?—or are you in a mood for jesting?"

" In a mood for jesting!" cried the unlucky father, in a most lacrymose tone—" Oh, no, Señor, far from it. Oh Lord! my heart misgives me; I cannot but fear the worst."

" Now, now, my old friend," interposed the king, impatiently—" will you at once explain to me the cause of your apparent alarm—why am I favoured with this early visit?"

" Pardon me, your gracious majesty, but I come in search of my daughter."

" In search of your daughter!" re-echoed the king, in amazement.

"Is she not in the alcazar?" demanded the father, in a trembling voice.

"No, in sooth, not," replied Don Pedro, much agitated.

"Oh, Heaven!" exclaimed Don Egas, in despair; "where is she then? She has disappeared from her home this very night."

"What say you, Don Egas?" inquired the king, with emotion.

"Alas! nothing but the truth. Petrona, too, is missing: no doubt they are gone together; for what purpose heaven only knows. Costanza was ever a good child, and how she could think of inflicting on me this anxiety is most unaccountable."

"Ha!" exclaimed Don Pedro, after a moment's reflection, a sudden gloom overspreading his countenance; "the object of this stratagem is easily to be surmised! but woe to the traitor if my suspicions prove true. Don Egas, know you if Don Ferran be absent from Seville?"

"Don Ferran!" cried Don Egas, as if illu-

mined by a passing thought; "perhaps he can account for this strange occurrence."

"Answer me one question!" cried the king, impatiently. "Do you know if he be now at Seville?"

"So please your majesty he is. I called at his mansion even now as I came to the Alcazar. I was told he had slept at home, but had recently gone to my dwelling; however I was loath to retrace my steps, in the expectation that I might hear satisfactory tidings of my child in this place."

Don Pedro appeared stunned by this information. Costanza flown, and Don Ferran not the partner of her flight! It seemed unaccountable; but the fact was no less true, and the king's violent temper again burst out in uncontrollable passion. "Yes!" he bitterly exclaimed, "some plot lies concealed under this daring act; but woe to its contrivers and abettors; they shall feel the full extent of my indignation."

Don Egas, being satisfied that his daughter

was not, as he had imagined, at the Alcazar, next bethought himself of applying to De Castro. He took a hasty leave of the king, who seemed no less surprised at the occurrence, than at the incoherent and singular manner of the deserted father. Don Pedro's feelings were wrought up to a paroxysm of passion. He paced the apartment in deep emotion, and seemed as if anxious to find an object on which to expend the virulence of his temper. Jealousy, rage, and disappointment alternately took possession of him; and he vowed vengeance against Don Ferran, whom he strongly suspected of being concerned in Costanza's flight, when suddenly the subject of his intended wrath appeared before him.

"Well met, Ferran," said the king, striving to conceal his rage; "we have something extraordinary for your ear, and it is fortunate you are come, we should else have summoned you to our presence."

Don Pedro fixed a keen, scrutinizing look on

the Castilian, who made no comment, but seemed to expect the king to proceed. A pause ensued, when Don Pedro, no way re-assured by the steady composure of the Castilian, continued— "A most untoward occurrence has taken place, and I marvel that you, being a party so intimately interested, have not yet received information." He again stopt; but again the Castilian preserved his wonted silence. Don Pedro, unable any longer to restrain the ebullition of his feelings, exclaimed:—

"By Santiago! this is either rare hypocrisy in thee, or an example of philosophy. Say if by chance thou art really ignorant that Costanza is flown? But," he added with a dark sneer, "what foolery is it to tell you Sir, what you know full well."

He resumed his walk, with folded arms and an abrupt step that plainly bespoke the agitation of his mind. He again stopt, and stamping fiercely on the ground, "By my faith! this is a case closely to be looked to; it manifests open

and daring opposition against our good will and pleasure. Costanza never would have taken such a measure of her own accord. No, some traitorous villain has been tampering with her, and right glad would I be to be made acquainted with his name."

"Señor," said the Castilian, "your wish may easily be satisfied, though I must premise that Costanza's counsellor is no traitorous villain, for I was the man!"

"You, Sir! you!"—exclaimed the king, his eyes flashing fire; "and dare you make a boast of the nefarious proceeding?"

"Nefarious proceeding? Heaven help us!"

"Yes! Sir—yes, a treacherous, a vile contrivance, to decoy a female from the protection of her parent. But let me tell you, Don Ferran, you have presumed too much on the foolish regard which the king has ever shown you; you have misjudged the extent of his favour, when you supposed that so glaring a transgression would be suffered to pass with impunity."

"Transgression!"—exclaimed the Castilian with warmth; "Señor, I am not conscious of any. The situation in which I am placed with Costanza amply justifies a measure we have thought it prudent to adopt."

"God-a-mercy! Señor," quoth the king with a bitter banter, "I give you much credit for your prudence; but let me tell you, very cautious cavaliers are sometimes apt to be overreached in their excessive solicitude. But I marvel that the same prudence that serves you thus well, has not taught you likewise to avoid the danger of giving offence to one who has the power to punish as well as to reward."

"Señor," replied the Castilian, "with all due respect to your majesty, I must express my surprise at this singular accusation. I cannot conceive how the king can take offence at a measure, in which the interests and happiness—"

"Enough, Sir, enough!" cried Don Pedro, haughtily; "you have tried our forbearance too long; know, Sir, we had our reasons for op-

posing your nuptials: and it was solely to thwart our intention, and to baffle our sovereign will, that you have traitorously and rebelliously devised this contrivance. But your project will not be accomplished; no! by Heaven, you shall learn better how to respect our mandates; and now, Sir, immediately acquaint us with the place of Costanza's retreat!"

Ferran De Castro underwent a fearful revulsion of feeling at these words; his generally calm demeanour was ruffled by the violence of Don Pedro; and the gross and bitter rebukes with which he was so liberally favoured, severely wounded his pride. His situation was exceedingly critical—he knew the extent of his danger—the dreaded moment had arrived; but he had firmly resolved to stand the shock. He braced his nerves up to the task, and stood prepared for the worst consequences of his resolution.

"Señor," he said, in a firm tone, "I cannot comply with your majesty's wish. I am bound by my word not to disclose the retreat of Doña

Costanza; it is according to her own desire it should be so."

"By hell! this presumptuous insolence is unparalleled. Villain! forgetest thou who I am?"

"You are the King of Castile," replied the cavalier with becoming pride, "and *I* am Don Ferran de Castro."

"Let, then, Don Ferran de Castro comport himself as becomes a subject towards his king, or, by God, he shall rue the result of his temerity."

"Señor, I am not conscious of shewing contumely to my king."

"Enough! rebel, and begone immediately to execute our orders. Costanza must be at court before to-morrow!"

"Señor Don Pedro, if she return to court, it must be to receive your royal assurance that her union with myself will no longer be opposed."

"Never! Sir," cried the king.

"Then never shall Costanza return to court,"

undauntedly replied Don Ferran. The king was thunderstruck at the cavalier's intrepidity. But uncontrollable rage soon superseded every other emotion. He darted a tremendous look on Ferran, and furiously approached him, with his hand on the hilt of his rapier. The Castilian however did not stir, but, unmoved and firm as a rock, he stood there ready to encounter the violence of the storm. The king was provoked to still greater rage; his eyes sparkled, his hand shook, and a hard heavy breathing declared the frightful agitation of his breast. He raised his arm and haughtily beckoned Ferran to depart. The Castilian made an humble bow, and was about to retire, when Don Pedro seized him by the arm.

"Thou knowest our orders, Señor!" he said, with frantic passion.

The Castilian, with a resolute expression of countenance, calmly replied—"My mind is fixed—inflict on me the penalty you may deem just." He again bowed, and made a movement

to retire. The king, no longer able to restrain himself, rushed against the cavalier, and aimed a blow at his face. Ferran, who held his hat in his hand, seasonably guarded against the intended affront, and his hat rolled on the ground. The noble Castilian's indignation was now aroused to the highest pitch. He forgot all difference as to their relative position, in the indignant sense of the insult which had been offered to his person. His eyes flashed fire—a deadly paleness covered his face; and in a voice broken by convulsive passion—"Tyrant!" he bitterly cried, "complete your work; I am well repaid for my foolish fidelity to a monster, destitute of all the noble attributes of man!"

The vehemence of this speech maddened the king: he furiously drew his weapon. Ferran de Castro, at the same moment, baring his bosom with fearful intrepidity.

"Strike!" he cried; "strike! for after the insult, the degradation you would have heaped upon me, death is the best apology you can

offer. Strike, Don Pedro!—consummate the work of ingratitude, and let those who spill their life-blood in defence of your crown, learn what is the guerdon they are to expect for so many services and sacrifices."

The noble and indignant resolution of Don Ferran, and his energetic apostrophe, checked the arm of the king. The Castilian, however, did not change his posture: the frenzy of passion had subsided, yet his eyes told the load of agony that pressed upon his bosom; and a starting tear gave testimony how deeply his inmost feelings had been lacerated.

"Don Pedro," he then resumed, with sad emphatic voice, "to recount my loyalty, my sufferings in your cause, would be a needless task, alike unworthy of my character, and unavailing to move your hardened and selfish disposition; yet here, I repeat, unarmed as I am, strike! it will be a severe lesson to those who blindly and faithfully serve a king."

"No!" contemptuously replied the king;

"not from my arm; you shall prepare in due time to defend yourself for your rebellious insolence; and if you must die, be assured it will be the death of a vile traitor, not that of a Castilian cavalier."

As he said, he cast a proud and scornful glance on Don Ferran, and haughtily left the place. This last instance of wanton and unprovoked insult again excited the irritated feelings of the young Castilian. He suddenly started from his position, resolutely replaced his hat, and took two or three strides along the place, in a mood of desperation and revenge.

"'Tis well," he sullenly said; "he is a tyrant; no human feeling can touch his callous heart!" A bitter smile curled his lip; he halted, and fixed his eyes intently on the ground: the conflict of his passions was appalling; some overpowering thought seemed to strive for mastery in his bosom. It was a moment of real agony, and the fidelity of years seemed in a moment destroyed. One terrible

look was cast towards the apartment, whither the king had withdrawn; and, turning to retire, he exclaimed, in a bitter tone of indescribable emotion—"Farewell, tyrant! Trastamara, I am thine!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ASTROLOGER.

Pandolfo. Whose lodging's this? is it not the astrologer's?
Ronea. His lodging! no, 'tis the learned phrontisterion
Of the most divine Albumazar—
Sir, you must know my master's heav'nly brain,
Pregnant with mysteries of metaphysics,
Grows to an embryo of rare contemplation.
ALBUMAZAR.

THE same day was passed by Ferran de Castro in a ferment of anxiety, grief, and resentment. He impatiently awaited the morrow, and the moment of joining the party of Trastamara, being now firmly determined to take signal revenge on the affront offered him by the king.

This train of gloomy thoughts was now in part relieved by a summons from his friend Sir John Chandos. This English knight, like the rest of his gallant countrymen, was now making preparations to depart.

Notwithstanding the malady of the Black Prince, it had been resolved immediately to quit Spain. Such, too, was the opinion of the physician on whom the prince reposed with most confidence, and as this advice agreed with his own inclination, he had given the necessary orders for the following day. He now sent a messenger to Don Pedro to signify his resolution. Indeed, the sojourn of Edward in Spain was a source of endless anxiety and vexation to himself, as well as to his brave knights. Neither the conduct of the king, the jealousy with which they were viewed by the natives, nor the odious construction of abetting the excesses of Don Pedro, which would be put upon their longer stay, were calculated to awaken any other sensation than that of chagrin. Accord-

ingly, on the following day, they had prepared to leave the city, and, by easy marches, on account of the prince's malady, they were to regain his court at Guienne.

"Don Ferran," said Sir John Chandos, as soon as he perceived the Castilian knight, "well met; you must hold me pardoned if the hurry of my departure has not allowed me to pay my last devoirs in person; but in the open and frank heart of Don Ferran this omission will call down no severe penalty. My true and good friend," he then added, in a gentle tone, "we depart sooner than we expected, and I felt eager again to thank the best cavalier in Castile, and offer him in return my services for the great kindness he hath shewn us. In troth, the favour is much enhanced when we reflect that kindness is not of every day occurrence in the court of Don Pedro."

This name, and the allusion to the character of the man who bore it, excited the indignation of Ferran afresh; and with a voice broken by

emotion, he could not abstain from observing—

"In sooth, Sir John, you speak with good reason; Don Pedro's kindness and gratitude will never oppress any man. But I warrant me old scores will ultimately be paid with interest."

"Yes," returned the English knight; "the storm is approaching that will soon burst; and I marvel the king has no better judgment than to mortify his best friends. But of this enough. I have more friendly matters to impart. It is clear, Don Ferran, that this land will soon be hot with rebellious blood: a gallant knight cannot surely witness feats of arms, and not take some share in them; when the explosion bursts you must declare yourself in favour of Don Pedro. After so many instances of his contumely and ingratitude, I could scarcely hold such support manly; and yet, to join the adverse party—but I mean not to counsel a knight who boasts of being true and noble. Your situation here, Sir Castilian, will be extremely trying and embar-

rassing. Now, hearken to my friendly advice: leave this land, and come with me to seek in other countries higher and more splendid feats of chivalry, such as will confer unsullied renown upon our names. Should, however, this offer be opposed to your inclinations, I care not to press the matter; but, at all chances, remember that in Sir John Chandos, Don Ferran de Castro will always find a true friend and brother, and that his mansion at Guienne, and his baronial castle in England, shall always welcome him with hospitable cheer."

"Señor," replied Ferran, much moved, "your kind offers merit my sincere gratitude, though for the present I may not avail myself of them; but I shall ever bear in mind your brotherly disposition in my behoof, and, if occasion call, shall accept your generosity with the frankness of a brother knight. The times, indeed, are stormy and perilous; yet now Ferran de Castro cannot fly the storm; he must answer to his country's call." After saying this, a

friendly and mutual interchange of offers and protestations of regard took place, and Don Ferran rose to depart, with a promise that they should meet again, and seek together the danger and glory of an adventurous life.

Night was closing as the Castilian, having quitted his good friend, returned to his mansion. The agitating events of the day had not allowed him to regain his composure; and the last words of Sir John awakened in his mind a different train of reflections. His angry feelings had, in great measure, subsided, and given place to that generous compassion, the first attribute and most brilliant ornament of man. Ferran reflected with just apprehension on the precipice on the brink of which the refractory King of Castile now stood, and he sighed in spite of the base ingratitude which he had evinced. The noble Ferran gradually forgot his own wrongs, while thinking of the danger which surrounded the king. In the frantic impulse of his resentful feelings, he had resolved to join the party of

Don Enrique; but he now perceived the increasing desertion of Don Pedro: and his English allies being once removed, pity softened his heart, and staggered his determination. After the affront received from the king, his pride would not submit again to serve the offender, and be exposed to fresh injuries; but yet he could not be induced to declare himself the open enemy of his once revered sovereign.

"No, by my honour!" nobly cried the cavalier, "I will not repay him thus. Despotic though he be, and forgetful of past services—yet, when he is thus deserted by all, it is not the time for Ferran to take revenge! No matter—embrace the proposal of Sir John, and withdraw from this unfortunate land? Yes: I will immediately speed to Valpardo; the respect in which I have hitherto held the slightest wish of my sovereign, will no longer interpose to delay my union with Costanza. I will then retire from a scene where I can take no part consistently with honour or inclination."

Having formed this resolution, the Castilian redoubled his haste, to make preparation for carrying it into effect, when suddenly the train of his thoughts was arrested by the rough, unmannerly grasp of an officer of justice, who, accompanied by a troop of *alguaciles*, without further ceremony, exclaimed—

" Don Ferran de Castro, you are my prisoner—I arrest you in the king's name."

The Castilian was stunned at this unexpected interruption, and, in the first impulse of his offended pride, laid hand on his weapon—

" Avaunt ! villain"—he cried fiercely, " or, by Heaven, I shall put it out of thy power in future to cross the path of an honourable cavalier !"

The prudent man of law vaulted most nimbly *a retro*, at the sight of Don Ferran's death-looking toledana; but if the cavalier, by this martial movement, disengaged himself from the hands of the official detainer, the influence over

his tongue was not equally complete, for he commenced a most intemperate clamour—

"Adelante *alguaciles*," he cried to three or four sable, meagre-looking functionaries—"advance, and take him into custody.—*Por Dios que estamos buenos!*—is an officer of justice to be thus grossly insulted and opposed in the discharge of his sacred duty?"

Then, as if afraid that the alguaciles' slender *varas*,* backed by his own formidable clamour, would not be sufficient for Ferran's single weapon, he added in a higher key—

"Good neighbours all, I charge ye, in the king's name, to lend your aid in securing this rebellious noble, and bear witness to his outrageous behaviour." The persons thus addressed happened to be a set of most suspicious vagabonds, and seemed very well inclined to bear witness to the fracas, but evinced no disposition to lend their aid to the distressed man of office.

* A wand.

Don Ferran was now effecting a safe retreat; the *alguaciles*, however, kept near him, although out of the reach of his weapon, until the clamour of the officer had collected so great a crowd, that the cavalier turned about fiercely—

"Thou rascal, begone! before I make thee meat for carrion."

"Meat for carrion! very well, Sir," cried the indignant civilian; "now, Señors, bear witness to this abuse."

"Begone, mongrel, I say, and follow me no longer."

"Mongrel! mongrel! bear witness to that, also. Proceed, Señor, in the name of goodness; you do me great favour; call me *ladron** at once."

"That title must be so familiar to thine ears, it can produce no sensation."

"*Cuerpo de San Juan!*—excellent, most excellent. Eh, neighbours, do you hear him? I am a ladron."

* Thief.

"Fellow! it is time to end this foolery, and if thou hast a warrant, shew it me."

"That will I soon do, and be overjoyed to see you reasonable. Now, Señor, look ye—the king's signet; at your peril make further resistance—it will be useless. Adelante *alguaciles.*"

"Surely," said Ferran, examining it, "this is, indeed, the royal signet—there must be some mistake."

"Mistake! no, no—*dios me valga.* I am not the man to make mistakes in the exercise of my function; so be quiet, Don Ferran, and allow yourself to be conducted to jail comfortably, like a good subject and a christian."

The Castilian perceived that the officer was, indeed, empowered to arrest him, and any further resistance would be idle; he therefore surrendered himself, with the conviction of his innocence being proved, and that he would soon be released from his present jeopardy. However, as he proceeded towards the prison, a painful

thought obtruded on his mind. He now suspected that some secret enemy had preferred a false charge against him; for he was too generous and manly to suppose that this proceeding originated in the private pique of Don Pedro, for the disappearance of Costanza. Moreover, the mysterious letter which Ferran had received the preceding night, gave additional strength to his doubts, for he very naturally concluded that the scroll had some connexion with his present misfortune. This conviction did not, however, excite much alarm in a breast which had hitherto been the shrine of loyalty: for, though that sentiment might have been weakened by injury, yet, until the present moment, he had been guilty only in thought.

Another consideration, far more galling to the Castilian, was to see his dearest project blighted by this untoward detention; yet he did not forego the hope of beholding the final accomplishment of his wishes. Under the influence

of these feelings he arrived at the prison, and was consigned to his lonely habitation. The following day was signalized by an event which threw the whole city into a state of excitement: the departure of the English prince and his companions. Indeed, some very indecent marks of joy were manifested, plainly indicating the spirit of rebellion that was at work, and the dislike which the public entertained for the present government.

With deep sorrow the generous Edward and his gallant band quitted a land which they had hoped to tranquillize, but which they now saw threatened with the most disastrous consequences. Their departure was the signal for more open and daring acts of insubordination. The strength and number of the malcontents had been increased to an alarming degree; several castles and towns were in open insurrection, and Don Alvar de Lara returned to France to invite Trastamara to cross the Pyrenees, and possess himself of a kingdom, now anxiously

awaiting his arrival. Indeed, a powerful faction of grandees had leagued themselves against Don Pedro, who now, with a feeling of mingled rage and dread, began to see the progress of the conspiracy. In a few days he received the alarming intelligence that the cities of Segovia, Avila, Palencia, Salamanca, and Valladolid, had declared for Don Enrique; and this alarm was augmented by the repeated rumours of the entry of Trastamara into Spain.

No sooner, indeed, had Don Enrique been perfectly assured that every thing was prepared for his reception, than he began to make strenuous exertions to dispute the crown of Castile. He had already made a powerful party in France, where Don Pedro was held in abhorrence, for the mysterious death of the unfortunate Blanche de Bourbon. He was still more excited with the hope, that his cause would be supported by the nobles and clergy; while it was calculated to make the fortune of a swarm of foreign adventurers, the bad effects of whose abandoned habits was

at that time sorely felt in France. Among the most zealous adherents of Trastamara was numbered Don Bernal, son of Count de Foix, whom he afterwards married to Doña Isabel de la Cerda, and from whom the dukes of Medina-Cœli claim direct descent.

Whilst the whole kingdom of Castile was in that awful situation which so generally precedes some tremendous crisis, the Black Prince and his companions arrived safely at Guienne, utterly disgusted with the treatment they had experienced from their ally. This was a most fortunate juncture for Don Enrique, ever on the alert to avail himself of any occurrence which might tend to the furtherance of his design. Despite of the flattering promises from the leagued nobles of Castile, and the support of his French allies, he still felt reluctant to renew the strife for the crown, without the aid of the formidable warrior on whose power he more implicitly confided. Bertrand Dugueselin was still a captive in the hands of the English:

and Don Enrique prudently resolved not to cross the Pyrenees until the ransom of his principal supporter had been effected.

Indeed, nothing now seemed to afford an obstacle to this wished-for event. Edward was no longer the acknowledged ally of Don Pedro: and though he certainly would never join against that king, however grievous the ground of complaint, still he would in no ways interfere in his favour, but determined to observe an impartial neutrality. This was a material point gained by Trastamara and his partizans, who speedily resolved to treat for Sir Bertrand's ransom with the English knight, who, according to the etiquette of chivalry, upon the payment of the stipulated sum, no longer objected to the liberation of the captive. (9.)

Don Enrique, attended by a considerable suite, crossed the Pyrenees by the difficult passes of Valde Andorra, with no less expedition than secrecy. Indeed, his alacrity was such, that before the King of Arragon had time to oppose

his passage, his permission not having been previously obtained, Don Enrique was already entering the confines of Castile. He crossed the river Ebro, and, turning to Don Alvar, "My friend," he demanded, "are we already in Castile?"

"Yes, Señor! Heaven be praised, we tread those dominions which GOD and the CASTILIAN PEOPLE have given to your majesty."

"I will not deceive the expectations of my good friends!" cried Don Enrique. "Once before I was compelled to submit to fortune, but now I enter Castile never more to quit it!" He then suddenly bounded from his horse, and throwing himself upon his knees, with the point of his sword he marked a cross on the ground, and, in a solemn voice, exclaimed—

"I swear, by this holy cross, never to quit Castile, however fearful my dangers, however disastrous the misfortunes that may surround me. No! dauntless will I stand against all contingencies, and devote my life to the issue of this

undertaking—so God and the apostle Santiago help me with their special grace!" This strange apostrophe was well calculated to inflame the passions, and keep alive the chivalrous hopes of his companions, and they testified their approbation with shouts of joy.

"In the name of God," said Don Bernal, "I also swear to second, until death, the efforts of Don Enrique, now lawful sovereign of Castile, by the will of his nobles, and the bull of his holiness Pope Urban the Fifth." The same professions of constancy and adherence were made by various chiefs, and with elated hearts, and quickened pace, the gallant little army entered Calahorra, the first city of Castile on that side. He was here welcomed with great acclamations, and his force considerably increased, not only by many of the inhabitants, who volunteered their services, but from various straggling parties, who came to join his banners from every point—some actuated by a spirit of turbulence, others dreading the cruelty of Don Pedro, or

expecting to reap good profit in the service of his bastard brother.

After a few days' repose, Don Enrique proceeded to the ancient and then powerful city of Burgos, where a most munificent entertainment had been prepared for his reception; the Bishop in his pontifical robes, with a numerous attendance of the clergy, first came in view singing a hymn of thanksgiving for the return of the glorious king, who was to free the land from the tyranny of the excommunicated and criminal Don Pedro. An immense concourse of people followed, and every thing held out the most brilliant prospect of the successful termination of Trastamara's undertaking. His first acts at Burgos naturally tended to conciliate the people. He immediately set those free who were in prison by order of the king: amongst others, several of his own soldiers, who had been taken at the battle of Najara. He proclaimed an edict, in which, *secundum artem*, the most flattering promises were made. In fine, he neglected none

of those well known tricks to acquire popularity, and present his own ambitious views in the most seductive light.

After this he possessed himself by force of the castle, where Don Jayme, son of the King of Majorca, had retired, and who, together with the alcayde, Don Alfonso Fernandez, obstinately refused to join his standard. Don Enrique prudently spared the lives of these two personages, and even gave them permission to retire in safety wherever they should think proper. "For," he said, "Don Enrique comes to govern the kingdom of Castile, not by compulsion, but by the free consent of the Castilians; therefore let those who prefer to join in the atrocities of the tyrant, retire: they are free. I will only count in my ranks men devoted to my cause from other motives than those of fear."

The leniency of Don Enrique towards those of the adverse party, his seeming kindness and fair promises, contrasted with the conduct of the king, contributed to strengthen his party, and

favour his pretensions; daily his forces increased, and every moment brought intelligence of some fortunate occurrence. In this posture of affairs, he contented himself with visiting the surrounding town, and by every means strengthening his popularity and increasing his army, before he attempted to march against the imperial city of Toledo, which a strong garrison still held for the king.

Meantime Don Pedro, duly apprised of the increasing power of his rival, the dereliction of his nobles, and even of his most intimate adherents, was in a ferment of anguish and rage. He beheld a cloud darkening the horizon that bounded his power, but the gloomy prospect awakened in his heart no feeling of fear or compunction for his past imprudence and excesses.

He grew restless and dissatisfied; even the favourite exercise of the chase, to which, as well as to every chivalrous pursuit, he was partial to excess, was now wholly neglected. He was observed to take particular delight in solitary walks at night, about the streets of Seville,

assuming the strangest disguises, and entering the most humble and obscure dwellings, to gather from the public voice the sentiments entertained of him, and the daily progress of the rebellion. These expeditions were always attended with the most bitter mortification, which a variety of little circumstances tended to increase. He heard some severe truths, mingled with torrents of abuse and curses. He grew sombre and taciturn; his disposition for playful satire deserted him, and a settled expression of fierceness and suspicion banished the traces of every other feeling. His court was no longer attended by cringing sycophants or timorous and subservient cavaliers: he found himself alone in the midst of the magnificent and populous city of Seville. In these hours of sadness and foreboding, he would occasionally wander through the gardens of the palace, and as he passed near the bower and baths of Doña Maria Padilla, his heart softened, and the unforgotten object of his adoration would shed over his seared breast the gentler

dews of human sympathy, and for the moment counteract the baneful and rancorous feelings which held dominion there. Woman! to thee alone is granted the magic influence that heals the wounded and lacerated heart of man, and calms its stormy passions! It was only a woman that could have softened, and even controlled, as she once did, the temper of Don Pedro; and the pleasing, though melancholy, recollection of her charms and her love, now threw round the sombre and deserted sovereign a soothing melancholy, such as is imparted by the illusions of some past dream.

He became more and more attached to his children, particularly to the consort of the Duke of Lancaster. Whence this unusual sympathy in the heart of a man, apparently callous to all the softer emotions of humanity? Whence this reverting to objects already gone and mouldering in the dust—this silent communion with the dead? It is a feeling implanted in human nature. Those who are the most deficient in

tender feelings, and all the gentler moods of mind, yet bear within their heart, though in a deeper mould, the seeds of those mortal affections which misfortunes may blight, or the foul exhalation of passion may stifle in their growth. They are too firmly rooted to become extinct: some tender recollections of the past will exert their mild and benignant influence over the mind, and will cause them again to bud forth, sometimes to expand into fresh beauty.

Don Pedro, despite of the courageous tone of his character, and the fiery impetuosity of his passions, was not proof against the abandonment which he experienced by all once attached to his court. He had before been subjected to the caprices of fortune, and to the treason of his vassals and friends, but in all his former troubles he perceived, or fancied he perceived, there were many sincerely attached to his person.

Besides, he was now oppressed by a sensation as strange as it was indefinable. Certainly the means of opposing his rebellious brother were

now not less than during the former contest: he was yet possessed of a considerable treasure, the greater part of the kingdom remained faithful to him, and he could rely with confidence on the integrity of many of his chiefs: yet he was pursued by a gloomy presentiment that darkened every prospect—his imagination no longer presented the flattering pictures which in hours of sunshine it had conjured up. Don Pedro sunk into that state of sombre dejection to which even the most undaunted and stout-hearted men are sometimes subject. Every external object assumed an aspect of hostility: and human means of resistance to the threatened catastrophe appeared less than they really were. It was now that the mind of the king, intensely suffering under the melancholy which oppressed him, sought through superhuman agency to see the shadow of his coming fate.

Don Pedro was not entirely free from superstitious belief in cabalistical skill, and the influence of the stars in directing and controlling

the powers of man. In his former days, when not harassed and distressed by repeated misfortunes and by his own violent passions, he had scorned to yield to the superstition of the times, though he never persecuted the sages in astrological science, as it was then practised at Seville; nor would he interfere with the incantations and magical pretensions of Celestina and the rest of the weird sisters of Triana. Indeed, Don Pedro had rather given countenance to a celebrated Moorish astrologer, named Abraben-Aben-Zarsal, whose art was held in dreaded respect. (10) This magician lived a short distance from Seville, the tenant of a small ruined tower, where he had his laboratory, and from which he issued forth his portentous predictions. He had come from Granada, where he had been persecuted by the Mahomedan king: who, either not approving of the Moor's terrible prediction of the destruction of his own kingdom, or from some other cause, was exceedingly inimical to his mystical trade. In this dilemma, he had

sought refuge in Seville, where he had experienced a welcome reception from Don Pedro, whose vivid fancy more readily received those impressions favourable to the art professed by the crafty Moor. He had once, between jest and earnest, consulted him, and came away highly satisfied with the astrologer's predictions, though he might have been somewhat puzzled to account for the satisfaction he felt, as the mysterious words admitted of very different interpretations.

In his present gloomy mood, the king very naturally reverted to the learned astrologer; the shadows of superstition now fell doubly dark upon his mind, and almost obscured the light of reason; while an undefinable and anxious craving for an immediate solution of the dreaded enigma of his life, at length determined him to visit the sage in his solitary and mysterious abode.

Accordingly, that very night, and with only one attendant, he resolved to seek an interview

with the sorcerer. A sensation of shame at first checked his curiosity; he was loth to consider himself a weak man, but every consideration gave way before the gloomy frame of mind to which he was now habituated. The night came on, and with the utmost secrecy he assumed his disguise, and left the Alcazar, accompanied only by Rufino Diez. This humble individual had been of some service to the king, who had every reason to believe he was devotedly attached to his interests. The manly tone of his character, the energy of his mind, far superior to his low birth, and the unconquerable hatred with which he was regarded by the partizans of Trastamara, especially the clergy, all tended to attach Don Pedro to a being whom, even in the absence of every other feeling, circumstances and interest might render faithful.

Indeed, Rufino seemed more devoted to the king, in proportion as he was abandoned by his courtiers and attendants. Like every man become hateful to his fellow-creatures, Don Pedro

was deeply sensible of offices of kindness, displayed in despite of general odium. Thus he felt a regard for the zapatero, and made him the companion of his nocturnal peregrinations and sombre moods. In the company, therefore, of this man, and in profound silence, Don Pedro now arrived at the tower of the astrologer.

It was a ruinous building, which in former times might have been accounted a fortress of a secondary rate, but was now so old and dilapidated, that nothing remained entire but a spiral tower, which at one time corresponded with another now crumbling into fragments. This ancient pile was situated in the centre of a plain, near a village, from which the sage supplied himself with the necessaries of life, and where his occasional visits were wont to produce no small sensations of reverence and awe. The moon shone refulgent, and shed a silvery radiance on the moss-clad ruins; the awful silence of which imparted to the breast of Don Pedro a thrill of superstitious terror, such as the place

and hour were naturally calculated to excite. One solitary light glimmered from the turret, where the sage passed his hours in nocturnal study, deeply investigating the hidden mysteries of the stars. Don Pedro loudly thundered at the gate; the hollow sound reverberated along the slumbering ruins, which had not for a long time been disturbed by such rude demands for admittance. The dull and moping tenants of those deserted walls were startled from their rest, and presently the ill-boding birds set up a shrill, lugubrious concert, noways pleasing to the ear.

The entrance gate was opened by an old man. The king declared the purport of his visit, and ascending slowly a winding stair-case, was ushered into the sanctum of Abrahen-Aben-Zarsal.

The appearance of the astrologer was in strict keeping with the spirit of his mysterious avocations. His long beard, silvered with the frost of age, his pale visage and the fire of his pene-

trating eye, were blended with the deep furrows of meditation, harmonizing well with his flowing robe, and the scientific apparatus with which he was surrounded. Hardly deigning to look upon the king, the ancient wizard, with a solemn, slow voice, as if he measured well his words, began:—

"Mortal! what wouldst thou with me, that thou shouldst thus come at dead of night to disturb my vigils, when thus deeply absorbed in the sublime science to which my life has been devoted?"

"Abrahen!" replied Don Pedro—"he who gave thee shelter from the persecution of thy fellow-countrymen, ought to be no stranger to thine eyes, however dim with age, or weakened by study. I am Don Pedro, King of Castile."

The astrologer made a low obeisance, but appeared in no degree surprised or intimidated at sight of his royal visitor,

"Abrahen," proceeded the king, "the fame of thy science brings me to thy abode: I come

to consult thee on my future destiny; but first I must inform thee, that the vaticinations of thy wisdom, and that of other astrologers, together with all the prophetic sayings of the *sabidores* of Seville, are daily proving more and more fallacious"

"Sayest thou so?—False!" exclaimed the sage with a gloomy smile. "Señor, a *sabidor* is not accountable for the wrong interpretation of his words; nor are the sublime mysteries of the occult science to be reviled, for the ignorance of those who consult its oracles."

"Señor Sabidor," cried the king—"it has been often repeated by you, as well as many other great sabidores, that Don Pedro of Castile should become the most powerful king of his line; that he would conquer the holy shrine of Jerusalem from the infidels, and that his reign should be celebrated for many and most famous victories. Now it is clear that these prophecies are false, since my kingdom is in open rebellion against me. I am deserted by

all my grandees, and encompassed by perils of every kind."

The countenance of the Mahommedan assumed an additional asperity; then, without uttering a word, he betook himself to the arrangement of his divining instruments.

Don Pedro, however, was in no way satisfied with this method of solving the difficulty he had started. His anger was rising, and considering the being before him as little better than an impostor, he almost felt tempted to divide the skull of the sage, as he sat before him, without deigning to clear up his doubts. But he was restrained in his murderous impulse by a terrible and penetrating glance from the sabidor, who at the same moment raised his eyes towards him—"Strike!" he said, "and divide the last threads of thy own existence."

Don Pedro was again awed by his superstitious feelings; he considered that his intention, though not perceptible by any outward demonstration, had been divined by the astrologer. This transient

emotion, however, soon vanished, and he regained his usual courage and presence of mind. After a short pause, he continued—"Learned sage, I verily desire that you will now inform me of every circumstance that my star has in store for me, whether favourable or otherwise. I speak in sincerity; therefore be open and frank."

"Señor," replied the astrologer, in a grave but sarcastic tone—"you are a monarch, and I know not how far a powerful man may endure the test of severe truths from one who apparently lies at his mercy: who will guarantee me from the effects of your anger, if I comply sincerely with your desire? and who can promise me that the service I should render would not draw upon me the full measure of your unjust indignation?"

"I can assure thee of thy safety," nobly and firmly replied the king; "but bandy not words with me; therefore, proceed, I say, without further preface."

"Señor king," inquired the sabidor—"should

it happen that on a very cold day a man were to take an exceedingly warm bath, think you he would perspire?"

"Certainly," replied Don Pedro.

"What, despite of the chilliness of the weather?" returned the sage.

"Assuredly," retorted the king."

"Then, Señor," continued the astrologer, "it is clear that that same perspiration was against the order of the prevailing season, which ordained cold to be contrary to such exceeding heat. Now, great Sir, in like manner as the heat of the bath can thus counteract the regular action of the season, have your excesses and crimes thwarted and perverted the natural tendency of your fortunate constellation, and caused the will to predominate over fortune. Thus you see that the cause of these changes in your destiny is not to be sought for in the ignorance or flattery of the sabidores, but in the excess of your own wayward disposition." As he concluded this remark, Don Pedro fixed his looks intently upon

the enthusiastic and undaunted countenance of the Moor, endeavouring to scrutinize whether sincerity or craft was predominant. Abrahen-Aben, however, met the glance of the king with perfect unconcern; indeed, he affected not to be aware of the king's passing thoughts; and, as if to divert his close attention, he again began to consult a ponderous volume of parchment, on which were portrayed several fantastic figures, surrounded with hieroglyphics and strange numerical signs.

"Well, Aben Sabidor," said the king, "what you have yet told me relates only to the past: I would fain learn what is to come; so I charge thee conceal nought which it may concern me to know. What will shortly happen in Castile?"

"Seekest thou to learn what were better not to come? I see the shadows of great events as they draw nigh, whose terrors will come and pass like a pestilence through this unhappy land," responded solemnly the learned man.

" There will be battle and peril on every side; every species of misfortune shall desolate Castile. Ay! well mayest thou groan in thy spirit, though lofty and unappalled. Yet these horrors will ultimately be succeeded by better days: perfect tranquillity and happiness, like the sunshine that follows the terrors of the raging storm, shall resume their reign."

" That, my good Sabidor," replied Don Pedro, " I could have learnt without consulting you. The life of man is composed of a series of lucky and unlucky events: no kingdom, no society, was ever known to continue from its commencement subject to the same influence; you therefore risk nothing in the way of reputation, when you predict what is only a fundamental law throughout the world. That there will be battles and misfortunes in Castile, I also can well foresee, and, by Santiago! I have no pretensions to hidden craft; but these are only the necessary results when an usurper aims at snatching a crown from the head of its rightful

owner. But what I wish to ascertain is, the termination of the struggle; whether it will be prosperous or adverse to the good cause; and if the latter, what resources might be called in aid to counteract the danger."

"Sir King," gravely replied Abrahen, "it grieves me to say, that you are no longer under the influence of a benignant constellation, but rather exposed to the wayward caprices of a turbulent destiny. The precise time and nature, therefore, of your perils and crosses I will not take upon me to decide; but this I can verily announce, that a grand catastrophe is drawing nigh: yea, an extraordinary event, which will be handed down to the remotest posterity, and will in all times cause wonder and surprise amongst the sons of men."

He then seemed as if suddenly inflamed with new inspiration. His eyes were distended—he stretched out his arms—a wild energy seemed to possess him, and with an awful voice he exclaimed—"Don Pedro de Castile, son of the

good King Alfonso, I charge thee, and listen to my admonition—Beware of the Eagle of Bretagne! Beware *la torre de la Estrella!** More I may not tell thee."

He then became doggedly mute, and this singular interview was soon brought to an end.

The king was struck with the last words of the sabidore; for those words had already, on various occasions, saluted his ears, and at the present moment they sounded peculiarly ominous. Don Pedro had formerly despised these warnings, but their awful voice now awakened in his bosom an undefinable sensation of dread. Whence this feeling in the man who had so often laughed at danger, and treated every kind of superstition with scornful derision? Was it that presentiment of approaching fate that often appals the greatest minds?

However this might be, the gloomy influence to which Don Pedro had now yielded, was well adapted to create still more dismal apprehension,

* Star-tower.

and it was under a strong sensation of undefinable terror that he quitted the tower of the astrologer, and bent his course towards the palace of Seville. Rufino, who had been a silent but attentive spectator of the foregoing scene, beheld with regret the deep impression which the sabidore's words had made on the king. He feared that, instead of producing a salutary effect in checking his wilful disposition, it would lead him to cast off every restraint, and, in the bitterness of despair, give way to yet greater excesses.

"Señor," he ventured to say, "these sabidores, I rather think, lay pretensions to a much greater degree of knowledge than they really possess."

"Right, Rufino," answered Don Pedro, unbending his gloomy sternness; "I think so myself; but the warning given by the Moor, and the dangers he predicts, are not so much at variance with sense and probability, as to merit unqualified contempt. A catastrophe is nigh; that I foresee; though who the victim must be remains to be yet solved. Still his solemn ad-

monitions are strange; they coincide so exactly with those of the Platero Jew, of Celestina, and all the host of minor *sabidores* and *brujas*, the prophets and witches that dog my steps." He paused, and then with a bitter sneer, proceeded:

"*Vive Dios!* this is foolery; I will not be the plaything of every vile cozener in my kingdom. No, in the name of the fiend, I will not: nobles, and clergy, and *ricos-homes*, soldiers, courtiers, sabidores, and brujas—all, all, are against their lawful king; but Don Pedro of Castile despises all: he may be insulted, and betrayed, and ——"

He suddenly paused—then in a sombre tone resumed—"and treacherously murdered—I see it; but, so help me God, their object shall not be easily obtained! No, for one single drop of mine, torrents of their vile blood will flow. Come, Rufino! chance has made thee the companion of thy sovereign; thy destiny is connected with his fate; thou at least must be faithful to him, for it is thine interest to be so. Friends I have none left, no, not one! for since the return

of the bastard, it is surprising how the affections of my courtiers have cooled. A curse on their craven spirits! the miscreants!"

"Yes, Señor," said Rufino, "you are not without a single friend."

"Where is the man deserving of the name?" inquired sarcastically Don Pedro, "when even the old dotard Don Egas, than whom there was none more obsequious, seems now a stranger to our presence."

"Señor," replied the zapatero, "the conduct of Don Egas is not surprising; no, it is quite consistent with his character; but when I ventured to assert that your majesty had a friend, I meant not the old calculating cavalier."

"Whom then dost thou mean?" demanded the king.

"Don Ferran de Castro, now languishing in prison!"

Don Pedro started at the name, and a deepening cloud of mixed shame and indignation suddenly came over his features. He felt mortified

at the indirect rebuke he received from a menial, yet was obliged to admit its justice.

"Rufino," he cried in a severe tone, "thou presumest too much on the forbearance of thy king. Already have I charged thee not to mention the name of a traitorous and rebellious churl."

"Humbly do I crave your royal pardon, if I offend; but Heaven knows I do it for what I think the true interest of my sovereign. No! boldly I will declare that Ferran is no traitor; some unfortunate accident—"

"The letter! the letter! that is a damning proof."

"Even that might be explained, might Don Ferran be suffered to speak in his defence."

"He shall be suffered, in due time," replied the king; "but at present my thoughts are more seriously occupied."

"Two months has the cavalier lingered in a gloomy dungeon," observed Rufino.

"And it is a great proof of my forbearance,

that during those two months he has not been in his grave."

In this sombre and terrible mood, the king arrived at the Alcazar.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRISON.

" But happen what there can, I will be just ;
My fortune may forsake me, not my virtue ;
That shall go along with me, and before me still,
And glad me doing well, though I hear ill."

BEN JONSON.

WHILST the kingdom of Castile was again rising in open revolt, and Trastamara boldly pushing his victorious course towards Toledo, Don Pedro, who could rely on no one of his nobles, had sought the assistance of Mahomed, the Moorish King of Granada, who immediately

obeyed the invitation, and came midway to Seville, with three thousand horsemen. Don Pedro had also sent several expresses to his liege and sworn grandees, to repair to his assistance, as in duty bound; but very few obeyed his summons: and the king at length determined, with a very slender army of faithful Castilians, and his Moorish allies, to meet Don Enrique.

Meantime the noble Ferran de Castro languished in the *Carcel de Corte*, secluded from every kind and sympathizing friend, without even the means of communicating with them, and debarred an opportunity of vindicating his innocence. He had now remained two whole months in a constant state of uncertainty and suspense. All his most flattering prospects had vanished, like the soft and mellow clouds of a summer eve, when rudely driven by the rising blast, the herald of darkness and the storm.

The ingratitude of the king, and his atrocious conduct toward the best of his subjects, had preyed upon his feelings, and for the first days

of his imprisonment, he was firmly resolved to join the party of Don Enrique, as soon as he should be enabled to carry his purpose into effect. Anger, wounded pride, disappointment, and revenge, all contributed to keep alive a disposition contrary to the more generous feelings of his nature. He had been deeply wronged by the man whom he had served at the risk of his life and all that he held dear. The thought of his beloved Costanza came with redoubled anguish to strengthen his plans of vengeance; thus he impatiently waited his liberation from prison, where he now believed he had been confined at the instigation of Don Pedro, as a more fortunate rival in the affection of Costanza; but since the detention of the Castilian, the mysterious letter had been taken from his person. On this occurrence he naturally conceived that he could expect no mercy from the despotic king, who he considered would be overjoyed in having a fair pretext to wreak his utmost vengeance. This thought rendered Don Ferran truly wretched;

the habitual tint of melancholy that shadowed his noble countenance, was now deepened to a darker cloud. Gloomy and resentful passion swayed his breast; smarting under the wrongs he had received from the king, unable either to fly from his unhappy land, as he had resolved, or to join the discontented party, his feelings were sometimes wrought up to a pitch of frenzy, which, added to the not very delicate manner in which he was treated, began to prey upon his health, and impress upon his features the stamp of premature decay.

In this manner the most generous and high-minded of Castilian knights was reduced almost to despair; treated as a delinquent and a traitor, when his conscience acquitted him of even the idea of crime. For if he ever had been guilty of treasonable designs, it had been when wrought to madness, by the insulting injustice of the king. He was now in a most alarming frame of mind. He hourly expected to be taken from prison, and conducted to the scaffold; or, what

to him was far more terrible, to be assassinated in secret, as he would thereby be unable to clear his fame.

In this state he was, one evening, pacing the narrow space of his gloomy habitation, when the door gently opened, and a cavalier, in disguise, secretly entered the place. Don Ferran halted, and bent a fixed gaze on the mysterious visitor, who, without any sign of hesitation, advanced towards him. He at first imagined it might be a secret emissary of the king; but his apprehensions were soon dispelled.

"Don Ferran," said the stranger; "fear not—I am a friend, and am come to render you service."

"Who art thou?" inquired the young cavalier; "this air of mystery forebodes nothing upright or honourable."

"This air of mystery," returned the visitor, "is indispensable on the present occasion. Señor, you need apprehend no treacherous design from me; for, like you, I am a Castilian noble."

"I know you not, Señor," returned De Castro, cautiously, "and therefore must decline any further intercourse."

The stranger threw aside his long folding cloak, and there stood before the astonished Don Ferran a gallant cavalier.

"Heavens! can it be possible!" he cried, in amazement; "Don Juan de Silva?"

"The same," answered Don Juan. "We were once boon companions, Don Ferran, though diversity of opinions separated us in after life; still, the remembrance of our old friendship impels me to render you service in the hour of distress; for though of the party of the tyrant, Don Ferran de Castro has always retained the esteem of his avowed adversaries."

"This language, Don Juan, is strange," said the Castilian; "but not more so, perhaps, than your apparently free access to this prison: our old friendship I have not forgotten, nor the ties of alliance and intimacy that united our families; yet I could never surmise, after the

many and tempestuous incidents that have taken place to widen the breach between us, that Ferran, in this sad state, had one sympathizing bosom in his favour. I thought myself utterly forgotten—and even now you must not tax my misanthropic feelings, if I demand of you, what service is expected of me in return for the favour you profess yourself willing to confer on an unfortunate cavalier?"

"First," said Don Juan, "it is necessary you should be acquainted with the nature of the service I would render you: I will then leave it entirely to your judgment and discretion to return its price, or to receive it gratuitously, for Don Juan de Silva comes to persuade, not to compel his brother cavalier."

"Compel!" cried the Castilian, with noble pride; "that, at all events, would be a fruitless task."

"Feel not offended, Señor: I stand rebuked if your feelings have been the least wounded."

"Proceed," gravely said Ferran.

"I come to give you liberty—to break those vile fetters, which disgrace the best of cavaliers!"

"No," interrupted the Castilian, "you mistake; these irons disgrace not Ferran de Castro, but him that imposed them."

"Yes," joyfully cried Don Juan, "this is another evidence of the extraordinary ingratitude of the tyrant. Don Ferran, you are free—follow me; I will conduct you to those who are now actively engaged in forwarding the interests of the good cause. Your appearance among them will be hailed as a most fortunate event—an event productive of much good."

"Ay!" cried Ferran, sadly smiling; "you mean, Señor, that I should join the conspirators!"

"Conspirators! no, Don Ferran, we are not conspirators. Our power and strength, and the many chances of success, enable us to discard that appellation—we are liberators!"

"Señor Don Juan," replied gravely the Castilian, "I will not dispute about names; but certainly it is your desire that I should abandon the cause of Don Pedro."

"Yes, Don Ferran; and reflect that it is a step which prudence, justice, and self-preservation imperiously require of you. Castile is rapidly declaring for Don Enrique. Already is he in possession of Burgos, Valladolid, and several other principal cities and castles: all the grandees and *ricos-homes* flock to his standard; his power increases rapidly, and he again has the support of Duguesclin and his French knights. The chances are all against Don Pedro, and therefore—"

"Hold, Don Juan!" sternly cried the Castilian; "the means of persuasion you have adopted, can surely never influence Ferran de Castro. What is it you propose to me?—that because his king is utterly deserted—because the usurper is successful, I should forego the principle which I have professed through life. Alas,

Señor! you can never have known me, if it be with such arguments you would seek to convince me."

"And can you speak thus, Don Ferran, when you are suffering under the most glaring injustice? Think what vile ingratitude for all your services! Remember the many wrongs you have sustained—the probable loss of Costanza de Vargas. This is no secret at Seville. Your courage, fidelity, and heroism no one will dispute; but remember that the noblest virtues prove injurious, if carried to excess. Ponder well on this, and accept a proposal which can in no degree taint your fair fame."

"Señor," replied Don Ferran, with much dignity of manner, "I will not play the hypocrite with you, but rather speak in the same free and open strain. Instigated by a deep sense of outrage and insult, and wrought to madness by my passions, in an unguarded hour I had resolved to abandon the cause of the king; but, in another moment, I adopted more generous

thoughts. Languishing in a prison, my feelings keenly excited by poignant recollection, I also felt an impulse to wreak my vengeance on an ungrateful king; but, strange to tell, your sudden appearance has confirmed all my better thoughts, and my mind is now more firmly fixed in its former resolution than ever. I will not accept of your proffered services."

"*Vive Dios!* Don Ferran," cried Don Juan; "this is perfect madness. When you were free, his insulting conduct made you resolve to abandon your master; and now that your wrongs are aggravated by wanton cruelty, and deprivation of liberty, you refuse to accept the means of asserting your rights. Reflect, Sir, on this flagrant contradiction—such inconsistency is unworthy a soldier like Ferran de Castro."

"Contradiction there is none, Don Juan," calmly replied the Castilian: "had I been guilty at the time I allude to, the cause of my guilt would have enabled me to palliate it; but now, Señor, reflect on the baseness of the proposition.

Is Ferran de Castro to steal away from a prison, by a mean compromise of his principles? Is he, like a common felon—a vile dastard—to purchase his liberation by a promise of engaging in acts which, however you may qualify them, bear the stamp of treason and crime? No, no. Don Juan de Silva, if you have ever felt esteem for Ferran de Castro, you cannot wish him to adopt a course which he deems so disgraceful—which he holds in such utter contempt."

Don Juan de Silva was awed by the stern dignity and firm tone in which these sentiments were conveyed; and though he could not but condemn, in his own mind, such fastidious delicacy, he still felt involuntary respect for the Castilian's motives.

He was, however, resolved to leave no argument untried to convince him, regretting that so noble a cavalier should be lost to his own party, and should so pertinaciously rush upon destruction. After a short lapse of time, he therefore resumed the subject.

"Don Ferran," he said, "I admire the high and lofty sentiments by which you are actuated, but I must condemn the errors which spring from such false enthusiasm. We are free, Señor, and not by any laws, human or divine, ought we tamely to bow our heads to unrelenting oppression, or to forego the defence of our sacred rights. This cause is sacred to liberty, and ought to conciliate the loftiness of your spirit."

"And are Bertrand Duguesclin," observed the Castilian, with a bitter and scornful smile, "and his troop of hungry adventurers, come into Spain with the generous and laudable intention of promoting the happiness of the Castilian people; or come they to second the ambitious schemes of turbulent grandees, and thereby secure a part of the booty? But, Señor, I will not enter into a discussion of the respective merits of the causes we embrace: I am perfectly convinced of the justice of the principles I profess. I may err; but were I to act otherwise, under the impression of this moment, I should belie my character

and honour as a true and noble Castilian. You, Don Juan, and some of your companions, I respect; for, however differing from me in opinion, you are an upright man. Adhere then to your own opinion,—I attempt not to convert you: in the same manner, then, respect mine—it is all I desire."

"Nay, Don Ferran," mournfully inquired De Silva—"am I really then to conclude that you reject the offer of your liberty?"

"I do," resolutely replied the young cavalier.

"But do you know," returned his visitor, in a more impressive tone—"do you know, Don Ferran, that your honour and your life are in imminent jeopardy—do you know that strange rumours are circulated about Seville, that Don Pedro will ultimately requite your services by an ignominious death?—are you prepared to meet your fate on a scaffold?"

"I am prepared for all," replied the Castilian, undauntedly; "but yet, Señor, methinks

you augur too unfavourably of my destiny—however strong may be the private resentment of the king, yet surely he can never so far outrage justice as to send a noble cavalier to the scaffold, solely because he was his fortunate rival in the affections of a woman. No, by Heaven! you wrong Don Pedro;—spite of his vices and the violence of his temper, he is possessed of more manly sentiments, and will never allow such rank odium to disgrace his name."

"Alas! Señor, how strangely your enthusiastic loyalty inclines you to gloss over the deformity of Don Pedro's character; surely you have had sufficient evidence to convince you that he is capable of the darkest excesses. His conduct will be doubly severe when he obtains presumptive proof against his victim."

"Presumptive proof! Señor," cried Ferran, in surprise—"he has never had it."

"Pardon me, he has," replied Don Juan, in an impressive tone.

"You astonish me, or perhaps you wish to

awaken my apprehensions; but do not trifle, Señor; fallen though I be, and abandoned by all the world, yet remember I am the same Ferran de Castro."

"Calm yourself, Caballero," returned De Silva; "I advanced nothing but the truth, and far am I from wishing to gain you over to a cause, the utility and justice of which your judgment does not approve. Don Pedro has strong evidence against you!"

"Explain yourself!" said Ferran, with redoubled anxiety and surprise.

"A letter!" replied Don Juan with emotion —"a letter of one of the leagued nobles in favour of Don Enrique—a letter inviting you to join their cause!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the Castilian, "the letter!" he remained for some time fixed in mute astonishment; he folded his arms, then with a bitter smile, he exclaimed—"*Now, indeed, my ruin is inevitable! Surely I have* MISLAID *that fatal document!*—but it is no matter; I am innocent,

and ready to meet the charge, and even death, if it be thus decreed !"

" Death ! shameful, degrading death !—never !" cried Don Juan—" no, Don Ferran, that terrible calamity must be averted ; you must follow me—and, indeed, I am bound by all laws to save you, since I alone am the unhappy cause of your misfortune."

" What say you, Don Juan ?"

" Recognise in Don Juan de Silva," was the reply—" the stranger who in the darkness of night gave that fatal letter into your possession. Heaven knows, that in so doing, I was actuated by a feeling of regard for an old companion ; but I little anticipated the difficulties in which my zeal would involve the man I meant to serve. Let me then, at least, Don Ferran, counteract the injury of which I have innocently been the occasion, by giving you liberty."

" Don Juan," nobly replied the Castilian—" now less than ever can I accept your offers ; my objections are increased tenfold : honour

and principle imperiously forbid that I should listen to your proposals. I am now a suspected traitor, and though innocent, yet in the eyes of the world, I bear that character. I will not quit my prison, and thereby incur the imputation of cowardice, and justify the suspicions of the people."

"Then be it so," exclaimed Don Juan de Silva; "I will no longer press you to join a cause which appears so strongly opposed to your own sentiments; and since you will not contribute to the grand regeneration at hand, you can withdraw from the field of contention. Go at liberty, then, without conditions."

"Don Juan," replied the noble Castilian—"I am bound to refuse your gift: Ferran de Castro will not flinch from the face of danger. Before I knew the circumstances you have disclosed, when I attributed my imprisonment to the private pique of the king, I would gladly have accepted your offer, had it been made without any binding promise of joining your cause;

now I cannot—I will not: I will abide any result that wayward fate may have in store for me. Therefore, Señor, I pray you attempt no further to persuade me, since my resolution is now irrevocably fixed."

"Don Ferran de Castro, let me entreat you—"

"Enough, Señor," sternly interrupted the Castilian—"I have spoken, and it will be as fruitless in you to argue, as it will be painful for me to listen."

The firm and decided manner in which these words were conveyed, soon convinced Don Juan of the utter inutility of continuing his expostulations. With a feeling of compassion for the pertinacity of his old friend, and yet with a sensation of respect for his highmindedness, he gazed upon him for a few minutes in solemn silence. Ferran de Castro appeared perfectly composed—his noble forehead was unclouded by a frown, and his pensive eye bore that melancholy expression almost habitual to his counte-

nance. He turned once or twice, and then halting again, addressed his visitor:—

"Señor Don Juan, at the same time that I consider myself bound to decline your services, I would fain persuade you of the sincerity of my gratitude for your intended kindness; be assured the recollection will not easily be obliterated from my memory."

"Oh! Señor," warmly cried Don Juan—"despite of your misguided zeal, we will save you: I am compelled to quit Seville, but yet those remain who will watch over your safety; we are too powerful now, and we find access to prisons, as well as palaces."

"Don Juan," said the Castilian, calmly and severely—"were it in my power, I should not hesitate to acquaint the king with the treachery of the jailers."

"Surely you could not be guilty of such madness!" interposed Don Juan de Silva.

"Señor, call it what you please, the want of power will alone prevent me."

"Deluded, obstinate man, then perish in thy infatuation!" cried Don Juan, in much agitation, and immediately quitted the prison.

The Castilian now began to reflect on the foregoing scene: and, amidst all the dangers with which he was threatened, he felt a sensation of gratified pride in having resisted the temptation held out to him. Indeed, from this moment, he became more calm and composed; those sudden bursts of passion with which he was at intervals oppressed, gradually subsided. He was now conscious that the king had not acted from a motive of paltry resentment, and this idea soothed his lacerated heart. Despite of the wrongs which Ferran had sustained at the hands of the king, a conviction that the present proceeding had not originated in malicious feelings, raised the character of Don Pedro somewhat higher in the estimation of the cavalier: and though he could no longer wish to serve him, after the affront which he had suffered, he considered himself bound not to act against

him. The facility with which Don Juan had found access to his prison, surprised him, and gave him a melancholy proof of the strength of the malcontents. He resolved to acquaint the king with the treachery of those to whom he had confided the safety of the prisoners; but he soon perceived his total inability to prosecute his generous resolve. All means of communication had been cut off, and Don Ferran observed that the jailer, conscious no doubt of his dereliction, and dreading the rectitude of his prisoner, was now doubly anxious in his care, and watched him as if his own safety were concerned.

In this manner some days wore tediously away, when one night, at a late hour, the door of his prison was thrown open, and an officer, with a few attendants, completely armed, entered, bearing a warrant from the king to conduct the prisoner away. This unexpected visitation struck an involuntary chill to the heart of the young cavalier; the ferocious looks of the

attendants, and the haughtiness of their leader, together with the lateness of the hour, and the mystery of the whole proceeding, naturally excited a suspicion that some dark deed was in contemplation. Don Ferran, however, soon recovered his wonted composure, and in silence permitted the irons to be struck off his legs. This operation was soon performed, and with equal promptitude his hands were secured by one who seemed very expert at his office. The Castilian's pride was sorely hurt at the unceremonious and brutal unconcern with which the jailer and his accolites completed their business.

"Wretches!" he cried, indignantly, "I mean not to fly; if such had been my intention, I could have accomplished it long before this. And now, Señor," he added, turning to the officer, "I charge you, in the king's name, to secure that wretch—he is a traitor!" and he pointed to the jailer, who heard this injunction with the most bare-faced impudence and coolness.

"*Dios nos defienda!*" cried the miscreant. "Here is a new way of proceeding. Jesus! Jesus! do you hear him, my brothers? I think the poor caballero is run fairly mad."

"Villain, thy dissembling is in vain!" exclaimed Ferran. "I accuse thee of violating thy trust by admitting persons to see the prisoners, and conniving at their escape. I accuse thee also of being a traitor, a rebel, a partizan of Trastamara!"

"Gracious Señor!" coolly returned the jailer, doffing off his greasy cap, in mock courtesy; "since you are in such a mood for accusation, you may also charge me with robbery, and murder, and perjury, and all the catalogue of crimes! Ha! ha! ha!"

The officer of justice upon this looked exceedingly grave, for the boisterous laugh of the jailer proved any thing but infectious; the earnest injunctions of Ferran, he considered, were not altogether to be despised, and he therefore continued silent, summoning an expression

of the utmost importance into his dull countenance. This fit of reflection, however, the shrewd jailer conceived argued nothing favourable, and he immediately applied himself to counteract its unpromising tendency.

"Señor Alguacil," he said, with seeming unconcern, "I appeal to your well known judgment and discretion;" here he stopt, and looked respectfully in the face of the officer, who was very well contented with an appeal so justly made, "and I appeal also," continued the suspected jailer, "to your acknowledged experience in all business of this nature: do you think it probable there can be the slightest truth in all the absurdities with which that caballero has favoured us? The fact is,—and this," he added in a low solemn tone, "I swear by Santiago and our blessed Virgin!—the fact is, that many fruitless attempts have been made to rescue Don Ferran, which my vigilance and integrity immediately baffled; but the best of the story remains to be told: and now, Señor

Official, I humbly trust your goodness to listen with attention. To try the mind of my prisoner, then, I contrived to disguise this faithful turnkey, this good Sarmiento," he added, pointing to a short, miserable looking wretch, "in the dress of a cavalier, to tempt our prisoner. Did I not, my good Sarmiento?"

"Ay, in troth you did! I swear by the immaculate Conception!" replied the little wretch, with consummate assurance.

"Don Ferran," resumed the jailer, "caught greedily the bait, when, to his blank dismay, we all pounced upon him, and laughed heartily at his foolish hopes. Ha! ha! ha!"

The little Sarmiento and the attendants forthwith sent an approving chorus of laughter, but the officer preserved a most becoming gravity. The Castilian was thunderstruck at the unparalleled effrontery of the jailer, and he could hardly fancy the tall and noble person of Don Juan de Silva, converted into the diminutive and ugly figure of Sarmiento. His injunctions

to the officer, however, produced no effect, for the worthy seemed to be very well satisfied with the jailer's version of the story. Whether his conviction was obtained by the words of the prison keeper, or by more convincing arguments, slily conveyed in a certain leathern purse, we will not pretend to determine, but Ferran's remonstrances were not regarded, and the jailer received full credit for the veracity of his story.

"Señor Don Ferran," said the ministrant of justice, in a pompous tone, "you must allow yourself to be blindfolded."

"What mean you?" demanded the cavalier. "Is it intended to conduct me to some secret and degrading death? If such be the case, speak out: I will not quail; but I conjure you to be sincere; for if die I must, I would wish that my last words were conveyed to the king, and the very few human beings who can be interested in my destiny."

"Señor," replied the man of power, "it is not for us to reveal the intentions of our sove

reign, but *blindly* to obey his mandates, as you too must do. Yet, for your tranquillity, I will say that your fears are premature, saving, however, what may hereafter come to pass; for the present, my good Señor, you must, willingly, and without opposition, allow us to proceed in the discharge of our commission, such being the will and pleasure of the king."

The Castilian made no resistance, but, with a scarf over his eyes, he was led in deep silence from his dismal dwelling. He was keenly attentive to catch the softest sound indicative of the mysterious transaction, but his conductor continued mute, and in this manner they traversed, as he thought, many streets of the city. They at length halted; then, as he imagined, they crossed a stony pavement, that resounded their tread; then they mounted a flight of steps, and halted again. Ferran felt sensible he was now arrived at the scene of some mysterious transaction: his mind misgave him strangely.

At first he thought Don Pedro had resolved

to put him secretly to death, but he soon discarded the ungenerous idea. Another, very different, now absorbed his imagination. He concluded from what he had observed, as well as from the last words of Don Juan de Silva, that the officer and his myrmidons belonged, or had been gained over, to the party of Trastamara; their strange conduct towards the jailer, and the buffoonery of the man, forcibly struck him as being conclusive evidence of the justice of his surmises. De Castro therefore no longer doubted that he was clandestinely conducted to some meeting of the leagued nobles, and that he was even at present among them. He accordingly awaited in anxious suspense the moment when the bandage should be removed from his eyes. He soon made up his mind as to the course he was to pursue: he resolved boldly to reject their services and intended kindness, and to pronounce his sentiments with fearless freedom of language. His scarf was at length removed, when, to his amazement, he found himself, not

surrounded by an assemblage of conspirators, but in one of the saloons of the Alcazar, and in the presence of the king.

He cast an anxious look around. Every thing bore an air of unaccountable mystery. The king was sitting by a ponderous table in a mood of deep abstraction; a large dim lamp beside him, shed its sombre beams over the countenance of Don Pedro, and revealed partially the powerful workings of his mind, reflected in the expression of his features. The apartment had no other light save that afforded by the gloomy lamp; and the lateness of the hour, and the silence that reigned around, tended to throw a chilling and awful sensation over the scene.

"Take off his irons!" at length said Don Pedro, in a low and solemn tone.

His orders were immediately obeyed. "Retire," he then added, at the same time waving his hand for the prisoner to approach. Don Ferran remaining alone with the king, advanced a few steps, with his eye fixed upon him; his sensa-

tions were not easily to be described. He found himself before the man who had injured him, and whom he yet considered unjustly irritated against him, but he bore himself with lofty and undaunted mien, though expecting that the first word the king uttered would be some severe sentence, some tremendous explosion of his indignation. However, he soon perceived that the countenance of Don Pedro was calm and melancholy, and no way distorted by the harsher expression of passion. This was a mood in which he had seldom seen the king: for even in his meditations he generally preserved that air of sternness which seemed habitual to him, except in moments of reckless pleasure, or when indulging in the sallies of his satire and fancy. The young Castilian stood rooted to the ground, unable to form any conjecture on the probable issue of the strange scene: lost in wonder, he awaited the commands of Don Pedro, who at length broke silence.

"Don Ferran, advance," he said, in a calm

tone; the cavalier obeyed, and his amazement was increased on beholding the king's manner, which he now perceived to be any thing but inimical towards him. Another pause ensued, in which Don Pedro seemed to experience some powerful revulsion of feeling, to undergo some fierce conflict within his own mind. At length he became more composed, and turning to the Castilian,

"Don Ferran," he said, in a firm impressive voice, "I have wronged you; I am convinced I have deeply wronged you; I have repaid your devotedness to my person, your heroic bravery and innumerable services, by an act of ingratitude unworthy of a king, unworthy of a Castilian. You seem amazed; but, Señor, marvel not at the words you hear. No, marvel not that Don Pedro should at least be capable of one act of nobleness. It is principally to obtain your forgiveness that he summons you to his presence. This I speak in all sincerity. Don Ferran re-

ceives an apology, that Don Pedro of Castile never before made to any man!"

The young cavalier, astonished at so unexpected an address, gazed still more intently on the king's countenance. It bore the genuine stamp of sincerity. No, he could not be deceived—treachery and deceit could not assume such an expression of kindness and contrition. He was compelled to believe that generosity alone, and a desire of atonement, had induced the king to adopt this singular line of conduct. Don Ferran's indignation was gone, and his affection for the king returned with additional strength. Deeply impressed with the scene, he advanced, and in a manly tone—

"Señor," he said, "your noble conduct binds me to your person. In an unguarded hour, perhaps, passion urged you to do what, I am certain, was contrary to the generous sentiments you have evinced towards your faithful servant. But, Señor, I am more than amply repaid, by

the satisfaction of the present moment, and it is my turn now to seek pardon of your highness."

"Hold! Don Ferran," said the king, "more of that anon. Before I proceed to the other affair, that called for the present interview, let me solemnly pledge my royal word to you, that in Don Pedro of Castile, Ferran de Castro will no longer have to behold a rival. No—by the beloved memory of Doña Maria, I swear, that Costanza de Vargas will, for the future, experience no further importunity from me. Don Ferran, you have my approbation to solemnize your nuptials whensoever you may think fit. Is my word sufficient security for all that I have said?"

"Señor," said the Castilian, much moved, "can you suspect me of so much baseness, as for a moment to doubt your sincerity and generosity?"

"Then," said the king, "you are content that all wrongs be cancelled on my part—

you allow that I have atoned for the injuries I have done you?"

"My liege, how can I think otherwise?"

"Well, Señor," resumed Don Pedro, in a more austere tone, "that point being settled to your satisfaction, and justice done as it was required, I now call upon you to clear your character from a dark imputation. Don Ferran," he then added, with severity, "look on this letter—do you recognize it?"

"Yes! Don Pedro," undauntedly replied the Castilian; "I know the letter well—it belongs to me."

"You acknowledge, then, that it was in your possession—it is no trick of your enemies, to work your ruin. Mind, Señor, this is no trifle; it is downright treason, and its penalty—*Death!*—from which *you*, even, shall not escape, unless you can clear yourself from the foul charge."

"My honored king," replied the cavalier, with

noble composure, "the terrible responsibility which attends that document I know full well, and, God is my witness, I would scorn to accept my life in virtue of a pardon, if the taint of treason was suffered to remain and blast my name; I will therefore speak in the utmost sincerity. That letter was thrust into my hands by a person in disguise, the night I was returning to my dwelling, after my separation from Costanza."

"Why was it not," inquired the king, with agitation, "delivered into my possession?"

"Such was my intention," returned Ferran; "and, on the following day, I repaired to your presence, when the unfortunate scene which ensued, relative to the departure of Costanza, drove the circumstance from my memory. It was then, Don Pedro, that smarting under the keen sense of injury, I inwardly formed the resolution of deserting your cause, and joining the rebels of Trastamara."

"Heavens!" exclaimed the king, as if stunned at the intelligence.

"Yes," said Ferran, "that baneful thought crossed my mind; but happily it remained no longer than the first ebullition of passion which so fiercely shook my soul. I then resolved to withdraw from Spain; but the same moment I was arrested and thrown into prison, where I have been nearly two months, without the means of communicating with any one."

"Ferran, a traitor!" exclaimed Don Pedro, in consternation.

"I must confess to you even my thoughts," replied the Castilian, "since I am pledged to conceal nothing; but I will, with equal sincerity, unfold what may, perhaps, speak in my favour. Señor, I had the means of escaping from prison—its doors were freely opened for my egress, but I scorned to profit by the occasion, since it might have justified a suspicion of what I was totally innocent. Upon the arrival of your officer, I gave him—the jailer—and his associates, in charge, as traitors, but my words were disregarded."

"What say you, Don Ferran?" cried the king, in consternation; "am I then betrayed by every one—by the meanest wretch, as well as by the proud grandee? Confusion! then all the traitors must have escaped from confinement, and the penalty due to their crimes is thus evaded!"

His agitation became terrible: he paced the long saloon with hurried step; then striving to stifle his overpowering feelings, he bade the Castilian proceed.

"Señor," said De Castro, "I have spoken with the sincerity and boldness of a true Castilian knight. Now, by the holy Heaven I swear, I am innocent of any other crime which may be imputed to me. Yes, Señor, I humbly pray to be judged by my deserts, that I may vindicate the unsullied brightness of my honour, and be again worthy of the confidence of Don Pedro."

"Ferran," said the king, "I believe your words, and I will not suffer the affair to proceed against you. I am perfectly satisfied of your

noble motives—your explanation is sufficient—now we are friends again."

As he said this, he extended his hand to the cavalier, who kissed it with respectful emotion. The king threw his arm upon the shoulders of his faithful adherent, for a few moments, in silence, and then, in a softened tone, continued:—

"Your friendship, Ferran, is now, in sooth, a balm to my heart. You see Don Pedro of Castile utterly abandoned by every one; even those on whom he has lavished his favours. The jailer's treason alarms me—the imprisoned rebels must have escaped. This must be looked to on the morrow—at present, good night; retire to repose, and leave me—I need some rest myself—be here early on the morrow."

After this happy reconciliation, the king and the noble Castilian separated, equally impressed with the most friendly feelings towards each other.

CHAPTER X.

REVERSES.

Je n'aspire en effet qu'à l'honneur de vous suivre;
Ah! ne nous formons point ces indignes obstacles:
L'honneur parle, il suffit, ce sont là mes oracles.
RACINE.

VARIOUS and conflicting were the sensations of Ferran de Castro, after his interview with the king—a thousand things crowded upon his imagination, until exhausted nature sunk gradually to repose: but, even in the arms of sleep, the foregoing scene recurred vividly to his fancy, with the seductive prospect of rejoining his dear Costanza. The raptured vision was dissolvep

only with the break of day. At an early hour Ferran rose, and bent his step towards the Alcazar. Buoyed with expectation, and breathing again the pure air of heaven, he sought with alacrity the well-known path, and soon arrived at the place of his destination. To his amazement, he perceived the halls and avenues of the Alcazar peopled with a vast concourse, on whose countenances alarm and terror were strongly depicted. A continual bustle, a low monotonous sound, pervaded the place, and every thing portended that some dreadful calamity was either apprehended or had already taken place.

The Castilian made way through the motley crowd—he bounded over the flight of marble steps, announced himself, and was immediately ushered into the royal presence. He found the sovereign of Castile in an indescribable state of perturbation—his eyes sparkled with rage and disappointment, and his clenched hand was firmly pressed against his heart, as he furiously paced the apartment. The appearance of De

Castro, however, tended somewhat to calm his agitation.

"Ferran, thank God, you are come," he cried in a broken voice—"I was about to send for you—I am betrayed by every one. The villains! could I but reach them with my weapon, and send a few of their dastardly souls to the dark abyss, by Heaven, my misfortunes would seem light to bear!"

"My liege, what means this confusion about the Alcazar?" said the cavalier. "Speak—command my humble services to the utmost of my power!"

"Alas!" said the king, bitterly—"they are fruitless now; our suspicions have been realized—the vile jailer has proved false, and all the traitors against the state are again free. Oh! for a thunderbolt to crush them! more than forty have effected their escape: but what increases my rage is, that the miscreant jailer and his accomplices have baffled my just revenge. Yes, the dogs have fled—oh! may they feel all

the curses I would imprecate upon them! However, justice has not been entirely baulked," he added—"some satisfaction I have had." His countenance became suddenly illumined with a smile of dreadful import; a passing thought seemed to give him satisfaction, and he dwelt on it with evident pleasure.

The Castilian stood rivetted in amazement. The king, in a tone of wild pleasure, continued:

"No, they have not all escaped. Open that window, Don Ferran."

The cavalier obeyed, and, to his utter astonishment and dismay, beheld in the court a gibbet, to which was appended the very officer of justice, who, the previous night, had conducted him from prison into the presence of the king.

"He, at least, could not evade his doom," continued Don Pedro. "It will teach a salutary lesson to his successors, in the discharge of their duties. Had the villain taken the traitorous jailer into custody, as you enjoined, some of the mischief might have been prevented; but the

miscreant was an accomplice: the jailer's purse was found upon his person, containing some coins, bearing the effigy of Trastamara." Here a sudden tumult interrupted the king. "Ay, by my soul," cried Don Pedro, "the beggars grow turbulent; two or three score of suspected traitors have already been arrested, and the rabble, no doubt, in its supreme wisdom, finds fault with our proceedings. Let the churls fume and fret! for the great crisis is at hand, and Pedro of Castile will be found well prepared."

"My prince," inquired Ferran, "have you reason to apprehend any immediate danger?"

"God wot, there is enough, my friend. Apprehend immediate danger, did you say?—No, no, it is past apprehension—every thing is now decided—the traitors have so industriously conducted their manœuvres, that an explosion is expected every minute. However, my faithful guards are well prepared; and, if weapons must

be drawn, I swear, on my honour, that the vile blood of the rabble shall flow as plentifully as water. The wretches shall not be spared."

"Yet, Don Pedro," respectfully observed the young cavalier, "might I, in my ardent zeal for your person, presume to offer my advice, would it not be more prudent to keep the turbulent multitude from proceeding to extremities? Think, Señor, is it an act of wisdom to apply the match to a slumbering mine?"

"By my troth, Don Ferran," replied the king, sarcastically, "you shew abundant prudence; but at present you must pardon my declining to accept your counsel. I will not—no, by my sword!—I will not endeavour to compromise, or sooth the passions of those unruly subjects. I will be king of Castile—fearless I have lived, and in the same manner I will die—so God and Santiago help me. But matters of greater importance demand our consideration. Ferran, with sorrow and indignation, I confess

that my bastard brother is advancing towards Toledo; nay, by this time, he may have laid siege to that city."

"But, remember, Señor," answered Ferran, "that it is a city faithful to Don Pedro, and under the command of true and well-proved caballeros."

"Ah!" cried the king, bitterly; "who can assure me, in these tempestuous times, of their fidelity? I will not see, day by day, the shameful defection of those who appeared most zealously attached to my cause. What think you," he added with a sneer, "of your precious future parent, the noble knight Don Egas de Vargas?"

"Why, surely," said Ferran, in agitation, "Don Egas has not joined the bands of Trastamara?"

"No, not actually declared," answered the king; "the old pliable sycophant has only sounded a prudent retreat in due time, to shelter himself against the coming storm. Under pretence of joining his daughter, he withdrew from court,

and retired to his country mansion, where, no doubt, he will be a careful and pacific spectator of the approaching contest. In his abundant precaution, he will direct his thoughts and actions according to the result. A plague on such calculating rascals!—but Don Egas would do well to hear counsel," he added, in an ominous voice; "his over-anxious prudence may prove his bane."

"My liege," said Ferran, "whatever be the failings of Don Egas, I think I can pledge myself that he will not, at least, declare himself an enemy to Don Pedro."

"Hold, Sir!" cried the king, with a sardonic smile; "you seem to forget how unlucky you are in your guarantee for another: remember how you pledged your life for this same man, a few days before the field of Najara. Ferran," he continued, after a pause, "it is indispensable that I should go in person, and meet that refractory and accursed bastard. The evil grows apace; but I hope, with the grace of God, to

root it out from my dominions, or perish in the attempt. Mahomed, the King of Granada, is coming to my assistance, with all the force he can muster. To-morrow I intend to depart from this city, with a thousand chosen men, and after meeting my ally, I shall in person conduct the war. As the only atonement I can make for my injustice to you, I am anxious to devise a plan that will ensure you future happiness, however disastrous my affairs may prove. You have my permission, from this moment, to join the object of your affections, and lead her to the altar. Then you must fix your residence at Seville, over which I give you unlimited power, acting as my vicegerent during my absence. If there be aught else that Don Pedro can do for his friend, speak! for he shall not find me backward in meeting his desires."

Ferran was much moved at this generous conduct of the king. For some time his feelings were too strong to admit a reply;—he gazed on

his royal master, who preserved a dignified composure, with grateful and approving looks, while Don Pedro expected the Castilian's answer. The noble cavalier, however, was too high-minded to suffer himself to be surpassed in generosity.

"My liege," he cried, with emotion, "your offer is a cruel favour; and you surely could not judge so ill of Ferran de Castro, as to propose ease and tranquillity to him, whilst his sovereign lay exposed to perils and difficulties? No, Don Pedro; already have I been the companion of your troubles—let me preserve that character to the end! I will not taste of the cup of happiness, whilst my king and country are threatened with misfortune."

"My noble friend," answered the king, well pleased with these sentiments, "consider that your post is not free from all danger and anxiety. A sacred responsibility devolves upon you; when the government of this city is entrusted to your care, you will not find the ease and tranquillity

that you surmise; besides, Costanza has very just claims on your consideration."

"Such claims," said the cavalier, nobly, "cannot be more sacred than those of my honour and duty. These command me to follow your banners to the field, and I will not prove unmindful of their call. This conduct I know my Costanza would be the first to approve. Yes, she is too generous, too high-minded, to prefer her own tranquillity to the glory and renown of the object of her pure affections."

"She is truly a noble lady," exclaimed the king with emotion, "and well deserving of the generous cavalier who has so successfully won her affections. Ferran, give me your hand! I will press you no longer, but joyfully accept the services of the only friend on whom I can implicitly depend. To-morrow, then, we depart from Seville. Go, arrange your affairs, and announce to Costanza your resolution! Heaven be gracious to her, and to you both—ere long I hope to see you united. The troops of my

allies are staunch, and though not possessed of the renown of the English knights, may yet serve me well. At all events, the bastard shall not obtain an easy triumph; and if it be decreed that usurpation and treason shall carry the day—if it be fated that Don Pedro of Castile shall fall—Heaven be my witness, thousands shall be crushed in his ruin.—Yes!" he added, in a low and bitter tone—"bloody shall be the spot where last I lay my head." He uttered these words with an appalling expression, enough to chill the heart of the most reckless auditor. Don Pedro turned away, and, shortly after, Ferran quitted the Alcazar, to make the necessary preparations previous to his departure.

The rumours already circulating, that the king was to march on the following day, threw the inhabitants of Seville into considerable excitement. Various groups prowled about the streets, and it required the utmost care and vigilance to keep the rabble within the bounds of subordination. The king had rendered him-

self so generally obnoxious, by his excesses, and repeated acts of indiscretion, that he found little sympathy, even amongst the plebeian classes whom he had undertaken to protect and patronize—whilst he sullied his acts of impartial justice by others which bore the stamp of deadly vengeance. These his secret enemies had not been backward in transforming into weapons against himself. Don Pedro had utterly disregarded the prudent counsels of his faithful adherents. He had provoked his generous ally and kinsman, by his repeated infringement of the articles of their treaty; and, in fine, he had taken every step to precipitate himself and his kingdom into that dismal abyss, which was now opening to receive him. Such repeated excesses, together with the almost absolute dereliction of his nobles, might alarm the most obdurate to a sense of danger; but the king of Castile seemed to pride himself on being inaccessible to any sensations akin to fear. He felt no dread for the perils of his situation, being enraged only that he could

not, in a moment, crush the authors of it. Remorse for his excesses, repentance for his errors, were feelings that found no room in his breast.

Strange that a man of uncommon mental endowments, possessing an acute judgment and lively imagination, should never, in the crowd of stormy sensations that continually agitated his breast, have admitted a single thought of self-preservation. Accustomed to expose his life with reckless courage, he valued it not when put in competition with his crown. His hatred extended from Trastamara and his associates, even to his own subjects, who had supported them, and he would freely have shed his blood to be revenged. Thus it was almost miraculous how Don Pedro so long protracted his downfall, at a time when the violent death of a king was not considered a point of such vast importance as it is at present. It was a circumstance still more singular, from the facility with which such an act might have been accomplished; for the king took not the least precaution about his safety,

but continued to ramble abroad, with very few attendants, and often alone. The preservation of his life, therefore, considering the hatred and abhorrence with which he was beheld, can be no otherwise accounted for, than by the dread which his personal appearance inspired, together with his amazing courage, activity, and strength. These qualities, added to the ferocity of his temper, naturally rendered him formidable, even to the most undaunted. But now his approaching departure revived all the rancorous feelings of the malcontents, and considerably lessened the terror with which he was beheld. It was only by the overpowering influence of his presence that the tumult had been restrained; but the moment of his departure renewed the signal of insurrection.

Such was the intention intimated by the conduct of the Sevillians; and Ferran felt a pang of sorrow and regret, when he reflected on these decided proofs of disaffection. In his heart he cursed the base and inconstant mob, thus

swayed by every passing gale of wayward fortune. Don Pedro, spite of his many faults, had on several occasions evinced a partial regard towards the lower classes, whom he considered oppressed by the *magnates* of Castile. He had repressed the ambitious pretensions of the grandees and high clergy, by advocating the cause of the people ; and the same people now seized an opportunity of evincing the gratitude they felt for past favours. Don Ferran, inwardly despising the wretches, whom no benefits could conciliate, arrived at his mansion, labouring hard to repress the indignation which the scene had occasioned.

Upon reaching his dwelling, his misanthropy was greatly lessened by the appearance of two men, who, though of very humble rank in society, were yet endowed with far more noble and generous sentiments than those he had recently scanned in the features of the assembled groups. Pimiento and Rufino had been anxiously awaiting the return of Ferran ; and upon his appearing, the faithful de-

pendants welcomed him with the most sincere and heartfelt joy. Rufino had hastened to congratulate him upon his liberation, the merit of which he might, in part, perhaps, justly claim to himself; the only being who had profited by the access, which circumstances had given him, to the king, to intercede in favour of the noble cavalier. It is, however, but justice to observe, that Don Pedro, though violent and despotic, had, upon due reflection in the intervals of stormy passion, perceived his injustice, and hastened to make reparation, in the scene which we have described in the foregoing chapter. With regard to Pimiento, he had arrived the day before from Valpardo, where intelligence of the imprisonment of Don Ferran had excited the utmost alarm and consternation. Don Egas, having rejoined his daughter, very prudently refused interfering in a business which would require his attendance at court, or his correspondence with the king, neither of which he considered as at all prudent. Costanza, in the

generous impulse of her mind, had resolved to throw herself at the feet of the king; but the voice of reason soon stifled the spontaneous suggestions of her loving heart. She knew, from Don Pedro's character, that such a step was conceived in rashness; and would, perhaps, involve her in ruin and shame, without ameliorating the fate of the dear being for whom she risked the danger. The powerful dictates of female reserve and delicacy happily thwarted her first resolves; for the favourable change in Don Pedro's sentiments towards Ferran would certainly not have been accelerated, had the object which partially caused his disgrace presented itself to inflame the king's passion. After the first anxious inquiries were over—

"My good Pimiento," said De Castro, "blessed be the chance that sends thee here, for I was in much need of thy assistance."

"Señor," humbly replied the escudero, "command me—I am your humble servant."

"You must return," continued the cavalier,

" and be the bearer of a letter to the Lady Costanza, telling her of my reconciliation with the king, who is now anxious for our union; a happiness which I have been obliged to defer, as my duty now calls me to follow him to the field of honour—"

" As in duty every true knight is bound," observed the escudero, very gravely. " Much doth it rejoice me, Señor, to see you entertain those noble sentiments; the love of the gallant Cid for the fair Ximena never suffered him to act in opposition to his duty; and then his triumph and delight were the more keen when he returned to place his laurels at the feet of his lady-love, to see the heavenly smile and the deep blush with which he was welcomed back. The most valiant and renowned knights of all countries have evinced great nobleness in repressing the ardour of their passion in behalf of their noble and martial avocation: thus acted our own Martin Pelaez; follow their example, Señor, and Heaven, no less than our dear lady

Costanza, will reward your virtue; so God and Santiago be our aid!"

"Very well spoken," said Ferran, smiling—"I will follow your good advice, as it behoveth; and now, my friend, I know that a little inconvenience does not weigh with you when it is to serve your master."

"No, Señor," joyfully replied Pimiento—"on such occasions I find the elasticity of youth returning, and my energies are unaccountably increased: I am ready, Don Ferran, to obey your orders, but I humbly pray that my absence from your side may only be for the time necessary to fulfil my commission; a good and trusty escudero must not be separated from his master in the hour of perilous adventure. If we recollect the escudero of the best knights—"

"Now, my friend," interrupted Ferran, gaily, "let those good escuderos rest in peace. I give them full credit for their worth, nor is it my intention to oppose your wishes; therefore, we must now turn our thoughts to affairs of greater

importance; and you, Rufino," he then added, "I suppose you intend not to remain in this city."

"No, Señor," replied the *zapatero*; "the king has honoured me with a post near his person, and to-morrow I follow him from Seville, where I marvel how I have contrived to escape the many snares laid against my life. I feel a dismal presentiment that, sooner or later, a terrible fate is reserved for me. I have offended those who never forgive; but, whatever be my destiny, I am anxious to meet my doom in the field of strife."

"Cheer up, man," said Don Ferran—"your stern and sombre mood seems daily growing worse; banish from your mind those fatal presentiments, which are only the foolish offspring of a morbid imagination."

"Only!—no, Señor," replied Rufino, with a sad smile, at the same time shaking his head, despondingly—"there's a secret voice within my heart that tells me of an impending doom,

and my heart has always been a true prophet of misery;—ay, the black visions, the agonizing dreams, the continued depression that weighs me down, are but too sure warnings of horror and dismay to come. Yes," he added, fixing his dark eyes intently on the cavalier—"blood cries aloud for blood, and mine must flow!—No, it is not an heroic death that is reserved for me—my end will be dark and horrible. I know it—I feel it; 'tis the firm conviction of my soul, and I cannot be deceived; but the will of Heaven be done."

The Castilian endeavoured to dispel the gloomy forebodings of the *zapatero*, for this singular being had grown of late more strange and moody; he was, moreover, the victim of many visionary terrors, which, added to the austerity of his character, and the natural gloom of his disposition, rendered him an object at once of pity and of dread.

Early on the following day, Ferran de Castro was in attendance at the Alcazar, ready accoutred

for his departure; an immense crowd surrounded every avenue leading to the royal residence: an active bustle and a promiscuous buzz pervaded the place. It was, indeed, expected that some desperate attempt would be made against the king upon his leaving the Alcazar.

Don Pedro, however, did not exhibit the least symptom of alarm at this popular movement, nor did he adopt any measure to ensure his personal safety. Boldly he came from his apartment, and in a moment stood before the assembled and mutinous crowd, who seemed as if struck powerless by his sudden appearance. He vaulted on his charger, and then cast upon the throng a terrible glance of scorn and defiance. Ferran placed himself by his side; a few other faithful nobles followed, and at the head of a thousand stout and well-tried partizans, the royal retinue quitted the city. At Carmona, the troops of Mahomed came in sight, and, soon after, a most cordial meeting took place between

the two kings. The force of his Mahommedan ally was limited to about three thousand men, but they seemed to be select troops, and capable of any great enterprise. Don Pedro beheld his army with more resentment than alarm; and as he proceeded, his indignation increased, for he found that the several lords whom he had summoned failed to join his standard, as they had stipulated. He directed his course to Ecija, where his forces received some addition; and having received intelligence that the inhabitants of Cordova had declared themselves in a state of insurrection, he resolved first to direct his force against that city. Accordingly, with astonishing alacrity, he appeared before its bastions. He made a vigorous attack by the towers, called "of Calahorra," situated between the gates of the city and the Guadalquiver. After a furious contest, he took this fortress, compelling the greater number of its defenders to fly, and putting the rest to the sword.

He now advanced towards the city, where its inhabitants, nothing dismayed by the power of the king, and the loss of the towers, resolved to oppose his entrance. Accordingly, with no less promptitude than resolution, in a few moments they demolished two of the arches of the bridge over the Guadalquiver. By this fortunate expedient they intercepted the further progress of the king. Boiling with rage and disappointment, Don Pedro now retired to his camp, perceiving his attempt on the city was rendered abortive; he assembled his troops, and proclaimed a decree, declaring the inhabitants of Cordova to be traitors and rebels, and that ever after they should be treated as such. He then swore a terrible oath, that should the city fall into his power, it should be reduced to ashes, and not a single vestige left to record to future ages its existence.

Happily this threat was never carried into effect, for the king was compelled to direct his attention to other quarters where affairs were in

more imminent danger. Thus Cordova was saved from the threatened ruin, for had it fallen into the power of the king, there is no doubt but he would religiously have kept his oath.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SPY.

"Ay me! what perils do environ
The man who meddles with cold iron!
What plaguey mischiefs and mishaps
Do dog him still with after-claps!
For though Dame Fortune seem to smile,
And leer upon him for a while,
She'll after shew him, in the nick
Of all his glories, a dog-trick!

HUDIBRAS.

WE need not follow the details of the war between the two irreconcilable rivals for a throne, but merely touch upon those principal events which form so many links in the progress and

arrangement of this work. Don Pedro, after his unsuccessful attempt upon Cordova, now visited the principal cities of his dominions, in order to collect men and ammunition to carry on the war. It was of great importance to him to prevent the surrender of Toledo, which was closely besieged by Trastamara, who there possessed a considerable number of adherents.

Meantime, the royal ally, Mahomed, entered Ubeda and Jaen, and, under pretext of the rebellious disposition of these cities, he treated them with the utmost severity and cruelty, and gave free license to his rapacious propensities. The greatest excesses were committed; for the Moslem, never a sincere friend to the Christians, neglected no opportunity of shewing his hatred, or of satisfying his avarice. This oppression naturally tended to widen the breach between the people and the king, under whose sanction or authority such outrages were committed. Those who had as yet abstained from declaring for either party, now, provoked beyond

measure, hastened to join the standard of Don Enrique. The king, notwithstanding the limited number of his forces, advanced boldly towards Toledo, with the loss of which he was hourly threatened. He arrived near that celebrated city with astonishing expedition, and resolved to risk a battle without any delay.

Early in the morning the armies met, when, in despite of the personal exertions of Don Pedro, Don Ferran, and a few other faithful cavaliers, the troops of the king were completely put to the rout. The Moorish allies shamefully betook themselves to flight almost at the commencement of the battle; and the Castilians, though they for a time kept their ground, were ultimately compelled to fly, abandoning every thing. Don Pedro, however, made an orderly retreat, with a scanty, but brave retinue, and, after many hardships and dangers, he came in sight of the small town of Orcajo at the close of evening.

He had observed a sombre silence during the

day, nor did his favourite Ferran attempt to disturb his meditations. Strong marks of savage disappointment and a wild desire of vengeance, were portrayed on his countenance, with an indescribable expression of every dark passion. He seemed to consider the cause wholly lost, and, in the bitterness of his soul, he exclaimed—"A curse on them all, vile traitors! but—" he added, passionately—"Don Pedro is yet alive, and many a desperate deed remains to be done before his ruin can be accomplished!"

Night had now closed, and the king resolved to take up his quarters at the town of Orcajo. From this, however, he was dissuaded by his attendants, who represented the place to be inhabited by decided partizans of Trastamara. The king, notwithstanding his reckless disposition, suffered himself to be withdrawn from so dangerous a step.

"Well, then," said he, "let this little forest be our resting place for the night."

At this moment, a wild cry attracted their

attention: it was a mournfully prolonged note of distress. A figure rushed suddenly from the forest, and seemed to pass with the fleetness of the arrow; it was that of an old man, poorly attired, and evincing all the symptoms of a maniac. As he approached the party, he fixed his eyes intently on the king, and exclaimed, in broken accents of grief and indignation—

"Oh! thou cruel king, remember me!—remember the unfortunate Platero, the father whom thou hast left childless—hear me for the second time—routed thou art, and flying from the victorious Don Enrique. Woe is thee! for ruin is close upon thy flight, and thou canst not avert the impending doom. Thou hast but little time to repent; yet repent, thou ruthless man; repent, and, ere you behold it, beware the eagle of Bretagne—beware *la torre de la Estrella!*" He said, and disappeared.

"Thank heaven, the dotard is gone," cried the king, "for I could scarcely repress my wrath. No, perdition seize me! and may I live

debarred of crown and kingdom, and die in foul contempt, if the bastard shall enjoy an easy triumph. It is an iron crown he has to gain, and in the power of an iron hand and heart. Oh! that we were but alone, with equal weapons —equal did I say? Nay, if he were twice clad in armed steel, soon would the brief strife be over!"

His features were convulsed with passion, his bosom panted, and the fire of his eye was terrific, as he seemed to glut his vengeance in the very idea. He then endeavoured to regain his composure, and affected to treat the prediction of the Jewish *platero*, with utter scorn. Yet his whole demeanour clearly indicated that the old man's words had taken firmer possession of his mind than he was willing to confess. His followers, spent with fatigue, now sought repose under the spreading branches of the forest trees, whilst Don Pedro, a prey to a thousand conflicting emotions, gazed around as if revolving in his mind what new line of conduct to pursue.

According to the natural bent of his character, he would gladly have rushed against the town, and wreaked his vengeance on his enemies; but he soon perceived the madness of such an attempt. By such a step he would only afford an easier triumph to his foes.

"No!" he cried, as if inwardly adopting some resolution, "better reserve myself for a fitter time; it will come, no doubt, despite of the abundant omens with which I am assailed on every side. Now, Don Ferran, we must here pass the night, since my few faithful partizans are unequal to the fatigue of renewing our march. But are we secured from surprise? for I make no doubt," he added, with a sneer, "that in these glorious times, when treason is the supreme virtue, not many hours will elapse ere my rebellious villains be apprised of the vicinity of their obnoxious king. My good Ferran," he then continued, in a low and impressive tone, "if I dread any thing, it is to fall alive into the power of those doubly ac-

cursed wretches. Oh! if such a fate were reserved for me! I trust in thee—ay, I firmly trust—that thou wilt act the part of a faithful friend, and a Roman, and, by one glorious blow, prevent the villains from enjoying the delight of glutting their sight with their captive king, doomed to suffer their malice, and unable to resist, except by returning scorn for scorn."

"Nay, Señor," replied the Castilian, "speak not thus; your words are sorrowful in sooth; let us rather think of providing against a surprise. A chosen piquet must be stationed at some distance in the direction of the town, that, in case of any approach, we may be apprised of the danger in due time. We will entrust this commission to a few well-approved and faithful partizans."

"Well-approved and faithful!" exclaimed the king; "Heaven forgive thee, Don Ferran! where shall we find men well-approved and faithful?"

"I will take the task upon myself," replied Don Ferran; "amid the general treason of the

Castilians, there are yet those who are not undeserving of the name." Don Ferran then called Pimiento, and four or five others, on whose courage and fidelity he could rely to keep watch on an advanced post.

" Pimiento," he said, " under your command I place these men. A most important trust is confided to your well tried fidelity and honour: nothing less than the safety of our sovereign is now concerned in the strict discharge of your duty. I need, therefore, say no more to ensure its observance."

" Don Ferran," replied the escudero, with signs of the liveliest pleasure, " I am too well aware of the unmerited honour conferred upon me, and I will not disgrace the good opinion you entertain of my poor deserts."

He then, with the little party under his command, took his position in a narrow passage, about half a mile from the wood, and near the road side. From this concealment he could perceive every passenger, without being observed,

and Don Ferran, upon the strength of Pimiento's honesty, now quitted the king, to repose a few hours, so that on the following day they might vigorously pursue their march towards Almagro, a town still faithful to Don Pedro. The king, however, felt no inclination to repose; his mind was in too great excitement to allow of rest. Whilst the soldiers, exhausted and worn out, lay stretched on the turf, plunged in deepest slumber, the king continued erect and sleepless, now walking with hurried step, now reclining against the trunk of some tree. The most dismal forebodings haunted his feverish mind: he was not depressed, for he was by nature invincible in mind; but he felt the most bitter and tormenting rage, upon finding himself in this desolate situation. He was a king, compelled to watch for his safety, in the midst of his own dominions, and he seemed to find sympathy with no one. In Don Ferran, he beheld a steady friend, a devoted servant, an unbending warrior; but the lofty equanimity of his temper, under the most

trying occasions, was little suited to the more agitated and stormy moods of the king. It was not strange, then, that the society of the Zapatero Rufino should prove more congenial to him. The gloomy disposition, the wild demeanour, and visionary character of this faithful adherent, joined to his manly courage, and noble qualities, rendered him a being capable of awakening the interest of any one; and the king, despite of his own elevated situation, could not but perceive a certain similarity between the zapatero's fate and his own.

Meantime, Pimiento, proud of the trust reposed in him, forgot every other object save the important affair in which he was engaged. He considered himself as much honoured as any knight in Spain; and it was with no small degree of satisfaction he felt that on his own fidelity depended his sovereign's security.

He held forth, therefore, in an interminable harangue, and endeavoured to prove, by many examples from history, that the faithful dis-

charge of their trust would be considered highly honourable by the world. He then favoured his hearers with long-winded histories of the prowess and renowned feats of his favourite heroes, and very cleverly contrived to draw some parallel between his present function, and some particular event in the surprising life of Bernardo del Carpio, the Cid, Martin Pelaez, and the rest of those worthies who continually haunted his imagination. All these fine speeches were lost upon the illiterate soldiers. They heard him in perfect silence, which Pimiento took for granted was a sure mark of their respect and acquiescence, and felt exceedingly gratified. No one, however, understood a word of his heroic farrago; still Pimiento's eloquence served very well to beguile the time, and his hearers, like most others on similar occasions, appeared very well pleased, although the greater part of his speeches were utterly beyond their comprehension.

But the attention of Pimiento was soon re-

called to a subject of more immediate importance, than even the daring exploits of the Cid Campeador. A low rustling noise was heard, as though some person was approaching cautiously, through the underwood, to observe them. Pimiento and his men were on the alert.

"*Como soy Christiano*," said, softly, the escudero, "but some eves-dropper is lurking about this place. My good fellow, did you not hear a noise?"

"Hush! hush!" muttered one of his men, "be quiet, and we shall presently catch the foe."

They now rose gently from their covers, when they perceived a man, a few paces from them, in the act of listening. They suddenly sprung after him, but the swift-footed rogue made toward the village, with astonishing expedition. Unfortunately for him, however, and for his pedestrian powers, there was one amongst Pimiento's party who continued the pursuit with equal celerity and alacrity. The scout perceived

his danger, and exerted his utmost efforts to gain the village in time, but he was exhausted, and began to relax. His adversary was a man of greater strength, though perhaps not equally swift: he at length came up, and easily secured his person, for the luckless spy happened not to have the same proficiency in the use of his arms as of his legs. He tamely permitted himself to be captured, and was as patiently conducted to the leader of the party, the renowned Pimiento, without striking a blow. What, however, was the astonishment of Pimiento, when he discovered in the person of the spy, his old comrade Pardillo, the servant of Don Egas de Vargas!

"*En el nombre de Dios!*"* cried Pimiento, crossing himself—"is it thou, indeed, Bernabe Pardillo, or does my eyesight deceive me?"

"Ah! Señor Pimiento," replied Pardillo, in a sorrowful tone—"it is I, indeed, *pobre pecador de mi!*"

"*Pecador*, in very sooth," observed gravely

* In the name of God.

the escudero—" for thou must know that the office in which thou hast been surprised by my men, is exceedingly base and criminal. Yes, I much suspect (**Jesus te perdone*) that thou art come with sinister designs, for no one but a man intent on wicked purposes is found prowling and listening at this time in solitary places — no, none but a rogue or a madman; and I grieve to say, Pardillo, that I always thought you rather more of the former than the latter. However, thou must now prepare to give a full and faithful account of thy purpose, for, look ye, friend, I have much power to harm thee." At the same time touching his neck, in a way not to be mistaken.

" *Virgen Santa!* now, don't say so," replied Pardillo, in a cajoling tone—" don't say so, good Pimiento—I know you have always had the reputation of being the kindest of men, and I am sure you would not use an old comrade, who always respected you, so cruelly. Indeed,

* Jesus forgive thee.

I ought to respect you, seeing that you were always so honest, and kind, and generous."

"Nay, nay," interrupted Pimiento in confusion, "that is nothing to the purpose. I don't want thee, friend, to sound my praises, and speak of my virtues, which, sinner as I am, I claim not, but thou art to answer for thine own deeds."

"Aye! *por San José bendito!*" cried one of the soldiers, "that he must do, and speedily —if he does not wish to taste two or three inches of my *toledana*."* These words, and the accompanying action, operated powerfully on the mind of the spy; he gave an involuntary start, and became pale as death.

"Two or three inches!" he exclaimed, in alarm; "surely you are not going to murder me. Sirs, as you hope for salvation, consider that I am guilty of no crime, unless to count as such my walking in the night,

* A toledo blade.

and running away when I was frightened; and in this case I am not the greatest criminal, since your friend here has proved the better runner."

"No buffoonery, sirrah!" cried the soldier—"it will not pass current here—*Voto va San Juan*—that thou quite mistakest thy reckoning, if thou thinkest to pay off our duty with bad jokes; now, *hermano*, say what thou hast to say, and be quick, for thy time will be short enough here—confess, confess!"

"Holy father!" said Pardillo, "but am I certain, in doing so, of obtaining absolution?"

"A murrain on thee, fellow!" cried, indignantly, Pimiento, "for a profane jester; speak to the purpose, or, by the sword of the Cid, thou shalt rue this day."

"Ah! Señor Pimiento," slily replied Pardillo—"I know that is a sacred oath to you, and —"

"All oaths are sacred to me," gravely retorted Pimiento—"but proceed, and with less

palavering; for, in good sooth, thou hast no lack of words, though marvellously sparing of ideas."

"Well, then, Señores," humbly said the scout, "I confess that I was persuaded to come and survey the country round, as every corner of it is well known to me; persuaded did I say?— I was fairly threatened with the loss of my life, if I made any opposition; necessity, therefore, not inclination, obliged me to comply, and God is my witness, that I felt many compunctious visitings as I proceeded in my undertaking. However, Señores, you see that I have done no mischief, and so I pray you release me."

"Release thee!" cried Pimiento, "it grieveth me sorely that I cannot grant thy request: no, no, you must go before the king, Don Pedro, and he will decide what is to become of thee."

"*Virgen Santa!*" ejaculated the affrighted spy—"I can plainly foresee his decision. He

will decide that my head shall remain no longer on my shoulders."

"That is nothing to us," phlegmatically replied one of the party.

"That I can imagine, gentlemen," returned Pardillo—"but, consider, it is every thing to me. Good Heavens! the very idea of meeting Don Pedro makes me shudder!"

"I am sorry to say," observed Pimiento, with much gravity, "that those fears are strong evidences of guilt; an honourable man fears nobody."

"Ah! but good Señor Pimiento, fear is a constitutional disease with me, and no proof of guilt. Now, in the name of all the saints, allow me to depart in peace."

"Thy prayers are of no avail," sternly returned the escudero.

"And does the good, the compassionate Pimiento speak thus! Where is that generous spirit, that chivalrous feeling, that made him so much regarded and venerated by the household

of Don Egas de Vargas? Alas! I see it is much easier to speak of humanity and generosity than to practise those virtues. Ah! Señor Pimiento, have you then forgotten those great heroes, those renowned knights, once your favourite models? Certainly they would not have exercised this cruelty towards a pitiful, insignificant fellow, like myself—a poor wretch who hath been deluded into the commission of an offence, the magnitude of which, alas! he did not know. Remember, oh, generous Pimiento! remember those grand examples of generosity, with the recital of which you so kindly beguiled the long winter nights at the castle. Once I recollect that, speaking of Bernardo del Carpio, you gave us an instance of his forbearance; but, alas! why do I recount those heroic examples, when I perceive that the spirit of chivalry is extinct even in you."

"Spirit of chivalry, forsooth!" cried one of the soldiers, impatiently—"the spirit of Satan seems to possess this rascally, insidious traitor;

he wishes to impose upon us with a parcel of nonsense;—what care we for chivalry, Bernardo del Carpio, or such ridiculous absurdities?"

"No absurdities, Señor Soldado," returned Pimiento, with great dignity of manner, "and I pray you to be more choice in your expressions when you speak of such important subjects. Shame, Sir! I marvel a soldier should venture to insult, in this opprobrious manner, the memory of Bernardo del Carpio, one of the first knights that Christendom ever produced."

"Ay! that he was," artfully interposed Pardillo; "witness his astonishing feats in the memorable field of Roncesvalles."

"Witness, also," continued Pimiento, brightening with joy, "his heroic conduct at ——"

"Oh!" exclaimed Pardillo, casting his eyes upwards — "he was almost a supernatural knight—as great as the Cid!—greater, perhaps. What think you, Pimiento? for you are far

more learned in these great matters than myself."

"It is neither prudent nor wise to start comparisons between great men," replied Pimiento, gravely.

"Ah, you speak with reason," returned Pardillo; "they were both transcendant knights. Heaven bless their souls."

"Amen!" very devoutly responded the escudero.

"Here's a scene!" quoth the matter-of-fact soldier—"what in the name of Barrabas have all those worthies to do with the apprehension of a vile scout, who has been detected in the very act of carrying on this his vile, insidious trade?"

"*Valga me Jesus!*" cried Pardillo, shaking his head with affected contempt—"this conversation is not suited to the capacity of every one; I, myself, God knows, should never have arrived at any knowledge of these matters, had it not been for the care and industry of Señor Pimi-

ento, who on all occasions shewed himself wondrously communicative. Ah! it is, in troth, to his lectures that I stand indebted for the few grand ideas I possess; for, gentlemen, you must know, that Señor Pimiento himself would have been a most gallant knight, had it pleased Heaven to have made him the son of a cavalier, instead of an escudero; but there is no knowing—greater events have come to pass; I say nothing—God is just, and merit will at length have its recompense, and then these eyes would be rejoiced to see Señor Pimiento clad in all the attributes of knighthood."

The tall figure of the escudero appeared to dilate in stature, as this eulogium was pronounced. He was insensibly forgetting his present situation, in contemplating the warlike objects that were ever paramount in his mind. His detestation of the odious occupation of Pardillo, gradually wore away in favour of the sentiments he had expressed. The stern rectitude of the escudero was visibly giving ground under

the subtle stratagem of the spy. The soldier Carnero, who beheld these alarming symptoms, now cut the conversation short, by observing—"Now, Señor Pimiento, I think we have heard enough of knights and chivalry, and it is high time that this rebellious dog should be conducted before the king."

Saying this, he roughly laid hold of the trembling Pardillo, who, finding the danger growing more imminent every moment, redoubled his artifices to disentangle himself.

"In the name of God, and of the Cid Campeador," he exclaimed, "in the name of all the saints, and of your well-known valour and integrity, Señor Pimiento, do not permit this unmannerly soldier to ill use me thus; you are the chief here, and I wonder at this insubordination."

"Eh! Señores," he added, with wonderful volubility—"Señor Pimiento has not yet given the word of command, nor are you sure he will second your sanguinary intentions. No, Señor

Pimiento is a kind man, and he will never lose sight of the magnanimous generosity of those illustrious knights who were once the glory of Spain. I say this in all sincerity, and God knows, I do not mean to flatter Señor Pimiento; for flattery is an odious thing, and well I know that Señor Pimiento hates flattery, as much as he hates cowardice or dishonour."

"Oh! well, friend," said Carnero, sneeringly, "thou shalt have justice, if not mercy, with a murrain to thee. Before you can say *credo*, you will feel as if your neck were jerked out of joint: come along, for I long to see thee dancing on a tree, and time is precious."

"Dancing on a tree!—*san Jose me valga!*" exclaimed the poor scout; "Señor Pimiento, in the name of your generosity, stand my friend; remember the spirit of all true and gallant knights—never did the afflicted sue to them in vain—never!" Here he threw himself on the ground, and, in a fervent tone, proceeded—"Oh! let me not implore your humanity in

vain: I confess my fault, but I solemnly swear, I am not the wretch you all suppose me. Be merciful—remember Bernardo del Carpio—remember the best warriors, how they would have acted on a like occasion."

These remonstrances were of great weight with the old escudero; all his humane and high feelings had been excited by the artful insinuations of the scout; he appeared uncertain as to the course he ought to pursue, and whilst he was thus pondering in his own mind, Pardillo resumed the subject.

"I feel certain of the strength of my reasoning, as certain as I am of your humanity; I know you will not consent to see me dragged before Don Pedro, to be butchered in your presence; for I make no doubt the King of Castile is at hand."

"Yes, my honest rascal," quoth Carnero, smiling; "thou hast not to fear much more trouble in this world, which, after the long run you have had, would in sooth be cruel; no, you

shall only have to march to yonder wood, and presently your business will be settled."

"But, good gentlemen, as you hope for salvation, what need is there for this unreasonable haste? Does the brave soldier speak thus lightly of taking away a man's life! Oh! Señor Pimiento, will the sacred names of our illustrious heroes permit you to sanction such a deed? Let me begone, and I will observe any conditions your discretion may think fit to impose upon me."

"Enough, enough," cried Carnero; "this will never do: sooner trust me a jolly friar, or the conscience of a Jew!"

"I address myself to Señor Pimiento," said Pardillo, "who has too much noble spirit himself to hear those great names treated with disrespect by common soldiers."

"Indeed, friend Carnero," said Pimiento, gravely, "I cannot approve the license of thy tongue in that matter."

"Nor I," replied, warmly, Carnero, "thy credulity and folly."

"*Jesus me valga!*" ejaculated Pardillo, crossing himself, "to call an honourable man a fool, because he stands up for the honour of the heroes of his country, and his own life!"

"By Santiago! I marvel at the fellow's insolence. Carnero, thou must not forget that I am thy superior; let any one at his own peril disobey my order. And now," he added, turning to Pardillo, "kneel down, and frame thy mind to a proper spirit of devotion."

The scout obeyed, and put on a most sanctimonious look.

"Swear," said, solemnly, Pimiento—"by the name of God, and by the memory of the great Bernardo del Carpio, the Cid, Martin Pelaez, Fernan Gonzalez, and all the most renowned Spanish knights, the flower of chivalry, and the admiration of the world—swear, Pardillo, that, upon obtaining thy liberty, thou wilt never serve again the mean office in which thou hast

been surprised, but that thou wilt retire, and lead an exemplary life!"

"I swear!" said the hypocritical Pardillo.

"And swear also," continued Pimiento, "that, immediately after thy release, thou wilt undertake a pilgrimage to Compostella, to do homage to the shrine of the holy Apostle Santiago."

"I swear."

"Thou knowest how sacred is an oath?" said the escudero, solemnly.

"Oh! Señor, I know the violators of oaths have no mercy to expect hereafter."

"Well, then, with that conviction," said Pimiento, "depart in peace; be an honest man; honour always the memory of our knights, for whose sake thou hast obtained thy liberty; and, above all, be a good christian: and now, child, begone! I take upon myself the results of this act of compassion."

The soldiers were thunderstruck at this most singular proceeding; yet they did not oppose the measure, afraid of incurring punishment for

a breach of discipline, when opposing the decree of the chief who had been placed over them.

Thus Pardillo regained his liberty, and, spite of his long run, marched off at a surprisingly quick pace. His joy was so great at his unexpected good fortune, that it caused a revolution in his memory, and his oath was utterly forgotten. It was, therefore, not surprising that the poor man, instead of taking the road on his pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella, should, very innocently, make directly towards Orcajo, to make known, as far as possible, the results of the honourable embassy in which he had been engaged.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ESCAPE.

A horse ! a horse ! my kingdom for a horse !

Richard the Third.

Rindete a compasion sueno procioso !
Las penas mismas su inclemencia fiera
Con tu presencia acaban :
Quien de ellas libre al despertar se viera.

Quintana.

Don Pedro in vain strove to compose himself to rest ; the painful images of his fallen greatness harrowed his imagination, and the friendly remonstrances of Ferran de Castro were employed in vain. This faithful adherent assiduously endeavoured, by a thousand flattering

suggestions, to raise his hopes and dissipate the cloud that hung upon his brow. The night was far advanced; the whole of the small party were sunk in deep slumber; when suddenly the Zapatero Rufino appeared before the king, with looks that boded no good.

"Fly, Don Pedro!" he cried, in terror; "we are lost!"

"What!" exclaimed Don Pedro, more astonished than alarmed; "is the danger so near, or have your visionary fears got the better of your reason?"

"Alas, Señor! we are surprised—a numerous body of armed men are close by the skirts of the wood. They certainly proceed from the enemy's camp; to encounter them would be madness, considering the inequality of our number."

"*Vive Dios!*" exclaimed the king, with passion, "I have been again betrayed; this is, in sooth, the most prolific soil for treason that ever unhappy king possessed. Ferran, what

say you now?—are you mute? Is this the way your man of trust, your vaunted Pimiento, does his duty?"

"Señor," replied Ferran, with emotion, "if I mistake not, the party comes from a different direction. But there is no time now to be lost, my liege; our horses may yet carry us beyond the reach of danger."

"No, by Heaven!" cried Don Pedro, fiercely, "I will first bury my trusty weapon in their recreant hearts—ay, it is when no other resource is left, that the King of Castile will fly before his rebellious subjects. *To arms! to arms!*" he then shouted, in a dauntless tone. The party started from their sleep, and in a moment every one was upon his feet. With the utmost promptitude, they collected near a thick part of the forest, and, concealed behind a cover of underwood and furze, they resolved to wait the approach of the party. But what was the consternation of this slender ambuscade when it found itself in a short time surrounded

by a numerous force, evidently apprised of its position. Don Pedro, with almost supernatural strength and courage, attempted to stem the overwhelming onset of his foes; but his followers, though brave, were few in number, and soon began to offer a more feeble resistance. The king was now in the most imminent danger; three desperate men advanced to take him prisoner. "Traitors!" cried Don Pedro, his eyes flashing fire, "I am your king—down with those base regicidal arms, and the curse of heaven and hell be upon him that disobeys me!"

The intrepid and energetic manner of Don Pedro for a moment awed the soldiers' design to secure his person; but at the name of the king, and *Viva Don Enrique*, they again rushed forward to the charge, bent on taking him alive. The contest had been too unequal to afford any hopes; and Don Pedro, boiling with shame and rage, fought his way through the enemy, with Don Ferran and Pimiento at his side. On

witnessing this desperate effort of valour—the king cutting his way, hand to hand, through the opposing ranks of his own subjects, assisted by the remnant of brave men, who purchased with their lives his safe retreat—even his enemies could not conceal their admiration, a few of them joining in the cry of *Viva, viva el Rey!* long live the brave Don Pedro! But almost the whole of the gallant band were killed or wounded: several of them, spite of their desperate courage, were compelled to surrender; but there was one who exhibited a superior stubbornness and ferocity of soul, and who, from too great an anxiety to protect the person of his sovereign, had thrown himself into inextricable peril—it was the Zapatero Rufino. Desperately he fought, as one who felt conscious his hour was come, and was resolved not to fall unavenged: Three times he nearly forced his way through a host of foes, but opposing numbers as often obliged him to return. At length, having courted death in vain, as he stood, covered with

wounds, breathless, and spent with fatigue, the enemy closed around, and succeeded in making him prisoner. His last melancholy wish of dying in the field of battle, was not accomplished. He was rudely bound, and when the enemy discovered the name of their captive, he was treated with the vilest scorn and abuse. He was then conducted to the town, amidst the acclamations of a mock triumph. The capture of this individual was by some regarded almost as good a prize as the king himself; for the zapatero was an object of dread and abhorrence. The misguided rabble were impressed with the supposition of his being a heretic, actuated only by a malignant spite.

Don Pedro, and his faithful attendant, Ferran, who had regained their horses, now made their way with the utmost speed from the spot. The idea that he might yet be taken prisoner, continued to harass the mind of the king, and was a source of indescribable horror. In their swift career, however, they were hailed by a well-

known voice, which, upon approaching nearer, turned out to be that of Pimiento, who sprang from a by-lane and made towards them.

"Heaven defend us!" cried Ferran, "that is my trusty escudero."

"Ah!" said the king, "let us tarry then; he may guide us to some secure place of concealment: a curse on my unlucky star, that Don Pedro of Castile should be forced to seek an ignoble asylum here!"

"Good Pimiento," said the cavalier to the escudero, "how have you escaped? are we pursued?—speak—the life of the king depends upon you!"

"Jesus!" quoth, ruefully, the escudero, "I have escaped with difficulty. I do not think we are immediately pursued, though you may be sure the hounds will soon follow the scent. Thanks to the bravery of the Zapatero Rufino, and my good party, we gained time, and seeing the direction you took, owing to my knowledge of the country I am enabled to overtake

you, for I deem it my duty to follow my king and Don Ferran at all hazards, and, more particularly, now that it is in my power to serve them. —Alack! I, perhaps, have been the cause of this unhappy mischance, and therefore am I doubly anxious to repair it."

"What sayest thou, Pimiento?" inquired Ferran, in surprise.

"Alas, Señor," replied the escudero, "I cannot now tell the tale, and we must employ our time to better purpose. Thank Heaven, I have the power to render you good service in this dreadful exigency. We are about five leagues distant from Valpardo, the seat of Don Egas de Vargas. There our king may find secure shelter, and I can conduct you to the place through by-ways and unfrequented paths, as I am intimately acquainted with the country around."

"Heaven be praised," ejaculated fervently the young cavalier, "for this fortunate event! Let us lose no time."

"Ay!" cried the king, "but it is not likely the old escudero will keep up with our horses. Ah! Don Ferran, the idea of soon beholding your beloved lady effaces every other consideration from your mind."

"My liege," replied the Castilian, "however greatly I might long to clasp Costanza to my heart, yet believe me, that in my earnestness to arrive at that place of safety, I consult the safety of my king more than my own happiness."

"I do believe you, Ferran," returned the king; "ay, despite of so many repeated acts of treachery amongst my subjects, I do think that Castile contains one true man, one loyal vassal of his lawful sovereign."

"Two! please your highness," cried Pimiento, with a stately tone.

"By my faith, I had overlooked the faithful escudero," quoth the king: "however, let us see how we are to proceed on our journey, for I apprehend that my good friend there will not be able, by mere dint of loyalty, to follow us on

foot. Ferran, your escudero is to be our leader; give him your horse, and mine we will share between us. Ah!" he added, with a bitter smile, "thanks to traitorous and mongrel dogs, one good steed and sword are all I can now command."

This arrangement being made, Pimiento, well versed in the intricate paths of the country, conducted the king and his attendants in safety to the castle of Valpardo. No signs of habitation were to be discerned around; and the building, an old pile of Gothic architecture, seemed to be tenanted only by owls and rooks. This mansion was situated in a very retired spot, and, by its construction, appeared to have been originally destined for a monastery. A large piece of stagnant greenish water lay beside the half ruined walls, near which some fine tall oaks reared their stately heads. All around was gloomy and cheerless; and, indeed, the place seemed more like the refuge of some disgraced favourite or sequestered anchorite, than the seat

of a nobleman and a courtier. The fugitives having obtained admittance, were ushered into the hall, where the embers of a decayed fire still partially illumined the place, while intelligence was speedily conveyed to Don Egas and his daughter of the arrival of guests of distinction. Costanza uttered a scream of joy, as she welcomed them, and was soon locked in the arms of her fond lover. But the utter stupefaction of Don Egas is not easily to be described. He perceived within the walls of his habitation the two persons who, according to the opinion of the world, he ought to feel most delighted to welcome as his guests, but whom, in his abundant prudence, he wished, at the present moment, a thousand leagues distant. The old courtier could find no words to express the most ordinary welcome. Besides, the very cavalier and unexpected manner in which he had left the court of Don Pedro, at the first symptoms of danger, now came across his mind, to his no small perplexity and dismay.

"Ah! Don Egas," said the king, sarcastically, "I am sensible of the great satisfaction such good subjects as you must feel in being able to contribute to the safety of their sovereign. Your mansion is retired, and will, therefore, afford a sure retreat until I can find some means of securely rejoining my adherents at Almagro."

"Señor," replied the old cavalier, alarmed at the mention of a stay, "my duty compels me not to disguise the truth. I would not have you be lulled in false security; for this place, my liege, is well known to many of the partizans of Don Enrique, and I should grieve to the latest hour of my existence if I were—"

"To disoblige the bastard!" interrupted Don Pedro, with an indignant sneer.

"You misapprehend me, my prince. I should bewail having in any way contributed to conceal the danger from my king, and thereby endanger his person."

"Thy trusty zeal," replied the king, in the same tone, "I appreciate as it deserves. But

be assured, Señor, you cannot feel a greater interest in the safety of Don Pedro than he does himself. Therefore be tranquil, for I purpose to remain here some time—unless," he added, with a scornful smile, "you, Señor Don Egas, in your abundant loyalty, do not care to receive me; and even in that case, God save the mark, you know Don Pedro is rather impatient of such cool proofs of regard."

"Your majesty," replied Don Egas, respectfully, "is master in this demesne, as well as of all here I possess. Heaven is my witness, that what I said was pronounced in the sincerity of my heart."

Whilst Don Pedro conversed with the old courtier, Ferran related to Costanza the peril they had encountered, and the gloomy prospect which the king's affairs presented. Happily these observations escaped the hearing of Don Egas, otherwise the fears of the prudent cavalier would have almost driven him mad. Indeed, Don Pedro could hardly have arrived more un-

seasonably at Valpardo, for it was immediately after an exemplary lecture, with which, in his parental solicitude, he had favoured his daughter, on the necessity of refraining from all external shew of attachment to the king. A first step towards the observance of this kind determination was, no doubt, to forget, at least for the present, that such a man as Don Ferran existed. Still, such is the perverse dislike of the generality of women to profit by sound and prudent maxims, that all the strong and pithy arguments of Don Egas were lost upon his daughter. Thus, at the very time that he was inculcating the necessity of forgetting her lover, she was inwardly resolving rather to sacrifice her life than follow any such advice, however prudent it might be.

Meantime a repast was prepared for the guests, of which Don Pedro partook with as much unconcern as if he were tranquilly sitting in the Alcazar at Seville. He was extremely attentive and gallant to Constanza, for whom he now en-

tertained great respect and admiration, divested of any other feeling. This change in the sentiments of the king may appear strange and inconsistent, but it is nevertheless of no uncommon occurrence in men of powerful minds and strong feeling. Indeed, mere selfish gratification of the passions, unsupported by the higher sentiments of human nature, is generally surmounted by any striking or unexpected change of fortune.

In this position was Don Pedro placed with regard to Costanza. He no longer looked upon her as formerly, but as the affianced bride of his most faithful friend. Indeed, he appeared anxious to shew her every mark of respect, as if to atone, as far as possible, for the misery he had formerly occasioned. He took a goblet, and filling it to the brim, gallantly pledged it to Costanza's health, wishing her all happiness with the faithful object of her affection. The toast was very gratefully received by the lovers, though Don Egas did not by any means appear to par-

take in the cordiality with a good grace; he seemed totally at a loss how to act, or what to say: and his uneasiness was the more distressing, as he dreaded the king's being surprised in his house more than any other calamity that could befal him. The affairs of Don Pedro were now considered little less than desperate; and this gloomy prospect wholly deprived the provident old courtier of a moment's repose. The rest of the day, however, wore off agreeably enough to the lovers, who quite forgot the danger that threatened them, in the genuine delight of meeting again. Ferran no longer remembered that he was a fugitive, proscribed, and obnoxious to the triumphant party. He found himself unexpectedly in the society of all his heart held dearest in the world, and the fond smiles of Costanza beguiled the gloomy prospect which his affairs presented.

The king retired early to rest, and Ferran, who was never absent from his side in time of distress, prepared to share with him the same apartment. This etiquette had been constantly

observed by the young Castilian: nor was the king insensible of this proof of devotedness, or sorry to have the assistance of his faithful favourite in the hour of need. They were, therefore, ushered into a large, cheerless apartment, hung with faded tapestry, and containing some cumbrous antique furniture. From the large casement, a view was obtained of a wild and sterile country, only partially relieved by a forest of olive trees, and here and there diversified by a straggling hamlet, or a piece of still, marshy water. This apartment had a secret door, communicating with a gallery, by which a private egress might be obtained from the mansion. It was owing to this circumstance that the comfortless room, which, from its decayed condition, seemed to have been for a long period tenantless, had been selected for the use of Don Pedro and his attendant. Indeed, in those feudal times, the castles and other dwellings of the nobility invariably contained some secret door and passages, through which an escape might be effected in time of peril.

As soon as the king entered the dreary place, turning round to Don Egas, who had very ceremoniously lighted his sovereign to his dormitory, he said—

"By my honour, Señor Don Egas, this is a chamber of ominous appearance, and well ventilated too; for I feel the midnight air, through the crevices, cool enough on my face."

"Señor," replied the old cavalier, "I much grieve it should be thus; but, as in honour bound, I must consult my king's safety before his comfort."

"Ay, by Santiago, rightly spoken," returned the king; "I have always given Don Egas credit for being a most prudent man; but, what think you, Señor? is my safety in any way compromised?—who, in the name of Satan, would be at the pains of looking after me in this desolate place? Why, it would damp the activity of the most rebellious of the rebels in all Castile."

"Would to God it may prove so!" cried

Don Egas; "but it is well to be prepared against contingencies; therefore you must pardon me if I can find no better accommodation for your majesty than this sombre and comfortless apartment. It is our safety chamber, and has been of service to more than one poor wight in jeopardy before now. There is the secret panel, by which your majesty may escape immediate danger; but God send we need not this last and desperate resource."

"Amen!" responded the king, gloomily; "at all events, my flight cannot have been so soon ascertained, and I do not mean to trouble you long with my presence."

These words were rather reassuring to the old cavalier, whose brightening countenance evinced his satisfaction. This did not escape the penetrating glance of the king, who repaid his prudent host with a look of mingled scorn and indignation.

"Here's an ungrateful, plodding, time-serving renegade," cried Don Pedro, as soon as Don

Egas had quitted the place—"a plague on such cold, calculating knaves! But, he may depend upon it, I shall not forget his hospitality!"

"Some allowance," said the Castilian, in a conciliating manner, "ought to be made for fears which are so natural to him."

"Confusion!" exclaimed the king, "such palliation I will not hear! No allowance shall be made by Don Pedro for those who, in a direct or indirect manner, contribute to his ruin. No, may the curse of Heaven fall upon my head, if I do ever, living or dying, forgive them!"

Don Ferran attempted no further remonstrance: he perceived that the temper of the king would not bear it; it was vain to offer any suggestions of reason. His misfortunes, too, in some degree seemed to authorize the indignation he felt, even at the shadow of any deficiency of those attentions to which he considered himself entitled; and the state of wild excitement into which his feelings had been thrown, rendered these sallies of passion almost unavoidable.

"My liege," said Don Ferran, wishing to change the subject, "to-morrow, by the help of God, we shall depart hence, and join our friends at Almagro."—

"Ay," replied the king, "that is now my only hope; before we leave this place, however, I should wish to see you united to Costanza. I suppose Don Egas will hardly venture to oppose our commands, for if he dare, by Santiago, I shall feel gratified in giving him a sample of the good will Don Pedro bears him just at present."

"Don Egas," calmly replied the Castilian, "has sense and justice enough to throw no obstacles in the way of our wishes, and, least of all, when sanctioned by the approbation of the king."

"You judge the old courtier too favourably," resumed the king; "however, we shall see on the morrow: and now, my good friend, may more favourable dreams hover round your pil-

low than are likely to fall to the share of Don Pedro of Castile."

The king and his faithful knight then threw themselves on their couches, dressed as they were, but not before they had placed their arms beside them; and endeavoured to compose themselves to sleep.

NOTES

TO

THE SECOND VOLUME.

Note (1), *page* 6.

THE victory of Najara having placed Don Pedro on the throne, he soon gave vent to his vindictive disposition. Some historians make a formidable display of the acts of cruelty by which he distinguished his restoration; but there is great exaggeration in the picture; many of the deaths inflicted appear to have been deserved by those who suffered them. Such recompense, assuredly, was due to the treasurer, Martin Yanez, and others.

Note (2), *page* 72.

There is a great probability that the story of the *zapatero* really happened. The sentence given by Don Pedro, is in strict accordance with his shrewdness, talent, and character. The incident of the canon is introduced in an old Spanish play, though, for the sake of propriety, the word organist is substituted for that of canon.

Note (3), *page* 98.

A curious story is related in an old history of Dugueslin, by Chastelet, concerning the interview between this knight and the ex-king of Castile, Don Enrique. It is said that Don Enrique was recognized in an obscure inn, by a squire who had served under him in the last war, and having been taken prisoner, was now allowed to have the town for a prison. With this squire Don Enrique concerted a plan to see Sir Bertrand, who was then confined, in the disguise of a pilgrim—a *ruse* which succeeded in the end.

Note (4), *page* 98.

Doña Urraca de Osorio, a lady of high rank, was burnt alive at Seville. In the history of this city (Book V. Chap. xiv.), the author, speaking of this

event, says, "that a gentlewoman of the name of Isabel Davalos, in the service of Doña Urraca, soon as the pyre was lighted, plunged into it, and took hold of her lady's dress, in order to prevent any indelicate display. She was burnt together with her mistress." The historian adds, that "this scene greatly augmented the hatred of the people towards Don Pedro."

Note (5), *page* 100.

Pope Urban the Fifth excommunicated Don Pedro; but the thunders of the church did not produce the desired effect upon the resolute temper of the king; on the contrary, he was so exasperated, that he kept no measure in showing his anger and indignation against the Holy See. He assiduously applied himself to return the Pope's spiritual hostilities, in a more decisive manner than mere words. His Holiness, seeing the inimical aspect of things, altered his tone, and sent him his nephew, a cardinal, to adjust matters in an amicable way, and absolve him from the previous anathema.

Note (6), *page* 106.

In each chapter of a cathedral there are four canons, denominated *de officio*, or in office, who have particular functions assigned to them. The *magistral* is he upon whom devolves the duty of preaching on every occasion of solemnity.

Note (7), *page* 112.

The Duke of Lancaster married Don Pedro's eldest daughter, and, after the death of that king, put in his claim to the crown of Castile, but without success. His name has been handed down by tradition, insomuch that there is scarcely any peasant in old Castile who does not speak of *El Duque de Alencastre.* The real name of the princess whom he married was Costanza, which, for convenience sake, I took the liberty of rebaptizing by the name of Beatriz.

Note (8), *page* 142.

What the dignity of the *maestre de San Bernardo* was, has not been handed down to us. It is true, however, that he was one of the various magnates who fell into the power of Don Pedro, at the battle of Najara; he was one also of those who were then put to death by order of the king, and served as one of the principal causes that called down the excommunication against Don Pedro.

Note (9), *page* 217.

Concerning the ransoming of Bertrand Duguesclin, the following anecdote is related by different historians, which, though susceptible of dramatic effect, I have

not been able conveniently to incorporate in my work. It runs thus:—"The prince, who treated all his prisoners with great affability, conversing one day with his general, said—'How does your spirit brook this confinement, Sir Bertrand?' 'Very well, Sir,' returned the knight; 'how can I be dissatisfied, since I am in the hands of the most generous prince living, and made prisoner by the most renowned knight in the world?' 'Lord Chandos is, indeed, so,' answered the prince, 'but though it is no dishonour to be conquered by a gallant man, what comfort have you in being detained, when most of your countrymen are ransomed?' 'Oh, Sir,' replied Sir Bertrand, 'I have this comfort; it is reported both in France and Spain, that your highness stands so much in fear of me, that you dare not let me go, which must needs redound to the honour of so mean a knight as I am.' The prince knew well to what end these subtile expressions tended; he also remembered that his whole council had been unanimous in advising him to reject every offer of ransom for so formidable an enemy, till Don Pedro had paid the money so long promised, fearing he might again embroil the affairs of Spain, and put that king out of a capacity of paying. He was, however, of too great a spirit to bear this insinuation, though prudence urged the necessity of his being

detained. To convince him, therefore, that he was superior to his bravado, and to let him see that his restoration to liberty depended on himself, he told him he would immediately consent to his ransom if he chose it: at the same time, to combat him with his own weapons, he resolved to ask such a sum as he could not easily raise; he consequently made him this reply: 'Then, Sir, it seems you imagine we detain you here through dread of your prowess and chivalry; but think not so, knight, for I swear by St. George, on payment of one hundred thousand franks, you shall immediately be free.' 'Agreed, Sir,' returned the general, 'and I thank you for the honour of rating me so high.' The prince would not recede from what he had said, though his council would have persuaded him to break his promise; and Sir Bertrand, by the assistance of the French king, the Duke of Anjou, and Don Henry, having raised in less than a month the sum agreed, which amounted to one thousand pounds sterling, was released from his imprisonment."

Note (10), *page* 227.

The story of the astrologer is related at great length in the Chronicles of Ayala. He is there called by the long name I use myself. Mariana speaks of him in the following manner: "It is said that before setting

out, he (Don Pedro) consulted a learned Moorish sage of Granada, called Benagatin, with whom he was in very friendly familiarity, and that the Moor foretold his death, according to a prophecy of the English sage, Merlin, who died about 400 years before that period."

Why Mariana calls the astrologer Benagatin, I cannot surmise. I have adopted the one given by Ayala, as more sonorous and better adapted to my purpose.

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